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THE

DAWN OF RADICALISM.

BY

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"A free government, in order to maintain itself free, hath need, every day, of some new provision in favour of liberty."—MACHIAVELLI.

Charles Lolley

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PREFACE.

IN presenting this volume to the public a few words of explanation are considered necessary. The author, a London clergyman, while ministering among the poor during the last thirteen years, had, at different times and in various parishes, drawn round him a number of young men desirous of learning something of the history of their country. During that time, having occasion to refer the students to larger histories for fuller information, the need of a short biographical account of the period under review was keenly felt, and it is hoped that the present work may satisfy the want. It is not addressed to the fortunate few who have leisure and access to well-stocked libraries, but is rather intended for those whose time for reading is limited. A history of the rise and progress of the Radical Party in England is here given, showing, among other matters, how the English colonies in America were founded, established, and lost; how France, at the cost of much blood, freed herself from a corrupt ministry and a profligate Church, thereby restoring the land to the people and liberty to the subject. The quickening influence which these two great social convulsions had upon English political life is carefully treated. A close view is given of the character of those men who in the days of prejudice and political apathy

bravely carried in their hands the torch of Liberty, threatened, as it was, with extinction, at every step of their stormy journey. Such near views are not to be found in the pages of general history, the historian being precluded from giving them prominence by the very weight and extent of his subject; thus in the treatment of a long period matters of importance are at times unavoidably slurred over or unnoticed. The present work contains an account of certain events of great social importance which may be easily grasped, and most of which have already exerted a vast influence in helping to solve the political problems which are now agitating the present generation. The utmost care has been taken to select those facts only which are likely to be of most value to the historical student, and all lengthy details have been rigidly excluded. A hope is entertained that the book may be ultimately presented to the public in a cheaper form. It is the result of several years' miscellaneous reading of the pamphlets and histories of that period which lies between 1688 and 1815. The old materials have been shaken up, sifted, and carted to a clear spot, and footnotes and other references, which often confuse the reader, are, for the most part, avoided. From the nature of the work the debt due to writers of recognised merit is of necessity very great, and such authorities have been used unsparingly.

J. B. D.

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Charles G. Loring

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THE DAWN OF RADICALISM.

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IN order to understand accurately that short section of the national life of England with which I propose to deal, it is absolutely necessary to study minutely, from a social point of view, the obstructions and hindrances which beset the period. This can only be accomplished by digging deep into diaries, pamphlets, memoirs, correspondence, biographies, and even old newspapers, which deal with the long succession of eminent men who have conducted our Parliamentary system up to its present condition, when a new era of hope lies temptingly before us. We cannot afford to forget the actions nor even the failures of those who fought the good fight of Reform. The study of history through the medium of such records is not unlike the contemplation of bees under a glass hive, where every movement of the community can be seen, and the secret intermittent processes by which great events have been matured can be traced. This close inspection may show us that selfishness, littleness, accidents, and a hundred unworthy motives may have been inseparably blended with the history of these men. But in spite of all faults and shortcomings, the belief will remain firmly imbedded in our minds that during that period some of the greatest and noblest men moved on the stage of English politics. The study may not be exhilarating nor in any way conducive to a robust faith in men

or manners, but it is not less wholesome on that account. It may help to check the too fierce feelings of virtuous indignation towards abuses in the present day—abuses which an overwrought moral consciousness permits itself on various occasions. One lesson it assuredly teaches: that the Imperial City was not constructed in a moment of time and that changes of permanent value have been very slow in their growth. It teaches moreover another trite maxim of similar importance, that the instruments which have effected the greatest and most useful changes were not always made of the purest metal. From the earliest Prime Minister down to Mr. Gladstone, each has exhibited flaws of character which did not blunt the force of the administration but entirely precluded idolatrous worship. There is a vast difference between the statesman as he appears in the accounts of partial writers and the same man viewed by the light of pamphlets, memoirs, and what otherwise constitute the raw material of history. It may be sad to learn that our idol has great faults and innumerable weak points, but we must not allow ourselves to be surprised or to change our opinions of his greatness, because his defects happen to be detected. The careful student must be prepared to make many allowances and have much recourse to compromise, otherwise there will be danger both of mistaking the drama of the history and of misjudging the character of the politicians who have played a part in it.

One of the foremost Radicals of his time was John Horne, better known afterwards as Horne-Tooke. A half century of prejudice has concealed and darkened his character. The following are the particulars of his early life.

John Horne was of humble origin. His father lived and conducted the modest business of a poulterer in Newport Street, Westminster. Mr. Horne had a large family. Benjamin, the eldest, adopted his father's occupation, but ultimately became a prosperous market gardener. He left as a memorial of himself the fact of his being the first person to introduce the pine-strawberry from Saratoga, through the intervention of the Earl of Lansdowne. This nobleman, who was devoted to horticulture, finding that Benjamin Horne was both intelligent and ingenious, often spent a half hour in discussing their favourite hobby, so

that a kind of intimacy sprang up between the two, much to the pride and gratification of the gardener. This scion of the Horne family died, leaving a considerable property to his immediate relations.

Thomas, the second son, originally bred as a fishmonger, afterwards followed his father's trade; squandered his patrimony, dissipated a property left him by his eldest brother, and finally ended his career in an almshouse.

John was the third son. The parish register of St. Anne's, Soho, states that he was born on the 25th of June, 1736.

There were four daughters, Mary, Sarah, Elizabeth, and Anne, who are supposed to have respectively loved, married, brought forth children, and died.

Mrs. Horne possessed benevolent instincts. At her suggestion her husband became a liberal subscriber to the Middlesex Hospital, which may have had something to do with the fact of his being afterwards elected the first treasurer of that institution. Dives, at every period of the world's history, has a much greater facility for securing any popularity he values, whether it be the notoriety of a rake or the fame of a saint, than Lazarus, who generally goes to the dogs, and remains with them. Mr. Horne was further honoured by a commission in the Train Bands,—those municipal troops of the capital—which had presented so formidable an array in the middle ages, had acted no unimportant part in the civil commotions of the seventeenth century, and still continued to be mustered and exercised for the defence of the metropolis. During the earlier part of the century from time to time they were drawn out in the outskirts of the town to perform mimic battles and sieges, in harmless imitation of the more dangerous armies on the continent. These bands were especially active during the first years after the accession of the House of Hanover, and the newspapers of that period contain frequent reference to their exploits. Hogarth has given sketches of those eighteenth century troops, some armed with tobacco pipes as well as guns; others on duty in undress, and a few deficient in legs and eyes.

John Horne recollected having accompanied his father part of he way, to oppose the grandson of James II., who had then raised

a rebellion in Scotland and advanced into England, perhaps in the identical march to Finchley, ridiculed in the comic prints of the day. He was then nine years of age, and quite old enough to be impressed with the stirring events of the times.

The intrepidity of character, broadly marked in the son, may be also observed in the father. Mr. Horne's house in Newport Street stood next to that of Frederick Prince of Wales, who then kept his court in Leicester House. The officers of the Prince's household thought it would be a convenience to them to have an outlet to the street through a certain wall which belonged to the poulterer. Without ceremony they ordered a door to be broken, and paid no attention to the owner's remonstrances. Horne appealed to the law and found its administration upright enough to defend him against the encroachment. Being, however, zealously attached to the House of Brunswick, he had no sooner obtained the decision than he handsomely gave the Prince the desired accommodation. The Prince was so pleased with his conduct that he ordered a warrant to be issued empowering him to supply his Royal Highness with poultry, and he accordingly acted for many years as purveyor to the household. Horne was, however, impoverished by this royal patronage, for the Prince never paid his debts, and his son's prospects were materially injured by the Prince's custom.

When not more than ten years of age, John Horne was placed at school in a village in Kent; the boy was not taken either with his reception or method of instruction, so he determined to desert, though his home was twenty-five miles distant. To disarm suspicion he left the house without his cap, and took the road leading to the capital. On finding himself pursued by his master, he took refuge in a deserted summerhouse, notwithstanding a strong aversion to spiders, and such was his resolution, even at this early period, that he actually clambered up the chimney, where he concealed himself for some time; the master searched in vain; and his companions, who knew where he lurked, from a feeling of honour gave no clue to his whereabouts. Having baffled his pursuers, the young adventurer once more reached the highway, and without any covering on his head or money in his pocket made directly for London, during a heavy shower of rain. To-

wards night, while crossing a common, he was overtaken by a peasant who hospitably entertained him and next day put him into a carrier's waggon, where he fell asleep and never awoke till he found himself in Covent Garden Market, not far from his own home. Being sternly interrogated by his father as to the cause of his desertion, he quietly observed "that his master was utterly unfit to instruct him ; for although he might perhaps know what a noun or a verb was, he understood nothing about a preposition or a conjunction ; and so, finding him an ignorant fellow, he had contrived to leave him."

Perhaps without overstraining the substance of this reply, a promise of the future philologist may be gleaned from it, as well as a dash of that reckless courage and dogged obstinacy which his stormy life too faithfully exemplified. Many years after this, at a time when his finances were not in a flourishing condition, an appeal for help was made to him by the poor people who had assisted him in his youthful adventure ; the appeal was not in vain, and even in his will this poor man's wife was not forgotten.

John, being a favourite and a boy of promise, his running away from the country school was forgiven ; he was placed at Westminster School, and afterwards removed to Eton, where, however, it has not been discovered that he gained any literary honours or made any effort to gain them. While at Eton, he associated with the sons of people of distinction, and in this mimic world the vices of the larger sphere were seen in embryo.

Young Horne soon became aware of the ridicule too generally attached to humble birth. An instance of his early wit is worth recording. Once, when a few idle boys, who had formed themselves into a circle, were interrogating each other about the rank and condition of their respective parents, one said he was the son of a baronet ; the next said his father was an earl ; and a third that his mother was a duchess ; when it came to young Horne's turn, he observed "that he could not boast of any titles in his family" ; and on being more closely pressed, added, with well affected reluctance, that his father was "an eminent Turkey merchant." This reply was satisfactory, for at that time England had a large share of the Levant trade, and a Turkey merchant was another name for wealth and credit. There was no expense

spared on his education. Six years of his life were spent under Dr. Sumner, then head master at Eton, where Pitt, Lyttelton, North, Fox, and the foremost men of the age received their training. Horne was not distinguished for his industry here any more than at Westminster. In fact, like most healthy lads, he learned just as little as he could within the walls and indulged in as much fun and frolic as was possible outside.

At the age of nineteen, Horne was entered as a student of St. John's College, Cambridge. Here he applied himself seriously to work, his name being included in the Tripos of the year 1758. Beadon was one of the names classed with his. A close intimacy sprang up between them. Beadon was advanced to the mastership of Jesus College and afterwards to the Bishopric of Bath and Wells.

Mr. Phillips, from whose life of Tooke much of the above has been taken, relates, that on interrogating an old lady, with the view of discovering if anything remarkable had occurred during his childhood, and whether she had known Mr. John Horne when a boy, "No," she replied, "he never was a boy; with him there was no interval between childhood and age; he became a man all at once upon us."

At the request of his parents Horne took holy orders, much against his will. His first curacy was in Kent. Here the young curate was demoralised with tea and muffins, and, partly in natural sequence, became afflicted with two serious disorders, love and ague; the latter obliging him to relinquish his charge. His course of true love was interrupted by the interposition of a cruel parent; the consequences, however, were not formidable, although the suffering at the time was poignant enough. He was accustomed to remark in after years, "I luckily escaped from two evils, matrimony and misery, at the same time."

On his recovery from ague, he felt indisposed, much to his parents' disgust, to take priest's orders. A quarrel ensued; he abandoned all clerical intentions and set about the study of the law, far more congenial to him than theology and rural life. He entered himself a member of the Society of the Inner Temple in the year 1756. At the Inns of Court he had for contemporary students Dunning and Kenyon, one of whom was afterwards his

defender and the other his judge. They seem to have been poor and obliged to study the most rigid economy. Horne tells of their dining in the neighbourhood of Chancery Lane for the sum of sevenpence each:—"as to Dunning and myself," added he, "we were generous; we gave the girl who waited on us a penny a piece, but Kenyon, who always knew the value of money, sometimes rewarded her with a halfpenny and sometimes with a promise." *

Young Horne, in spite of his strong inclination towards the law, his singular aptitude for the most successful prosecution of it, and the companionship of some of the most fortunate of its young proficients, was bound beyond redemption to another profession. The career at the bar was the most alluring to him; the one for which he had peculiar talents and which was more congenial to his turn of mind; still he was unable to cope with his father and exhausted funds. He thus unwillingly allowed himself to be severed from the law and bound to the church, by the then indissoluble link of priest's orders. In 1760 the living of New Brentford (worth about £300 a year), was purchased for him by his father. This he held for the next eleven years, doing his duty faithfully according to the standard of the day. In order to make his ministrations more acceptable, he studied for a time the healing art, and, having learned to compound a few simple

* Sir N. Wraxall further informs us that Lord Kenyon was "irascible in temper, destitute of all refinement in his dress, and parsimonious even to a degree approaching to avarice. Nevertheless," he adds, "he more than balanced these defects by strict morality, probity, and integrity." Of his habits when he became chief justice the following anecdote gives a remarkable instance:—

A gentleman who had sold to Lord Kenyon a cottage at Richmond, going into the neighbourhood, had a mind to take a view of his old residence; and, on application, was readily admitted by the housekeeper. Entering the principal room, he saw on the table some books, which proved to be the Bible, Epictetus, and the "Whole Duty of Man." "Does my lord read this?" said the gentleman, taking up the Bible. "No, sir," replied the woman "he is always poring over this little book" (pointing to Epictetus). "I don't know what it is," she added; "but my lady reads the other two. They come down here on Saturday evening, bring a shoulder or a leg of mutton with them, which serves for Sunday, and they leave me the remains, which serves me for the week."

medicines, formed a little dispensary at the parsonage from which he supplied the wants of his numerous patients. He was accustomed to plume himself on the cures he performed, and often observed "that though physic was said to be a problematic art, he believed that his medical were far more efficacious than his spiritual labours."

The position of Horne at this period of his life, driven to perform uncongenial duties in Brentford, with only books to afford him consolation during the long hours in the lonely vicarage, somewhat bears a resemblance to the ill-fated Swift, who, when deceived by his fine friends, had to retire to Laracor, where he felt like a poisoned rat in a hole, waiting for the sunshine which never came.

There was quite enough in the notions then current among the clergy of the Establishment to account for a man like Horne, who felt no call to exclusive spiritual work, and who had entered the ranks with reluctance, endeavouring to leave them. The principles of Christianity, which unquestionably teach that all men are equal in the sight of God, were not enforced by the Church; in their place a natural subordination of classes was taught, and the consequent obligation of the poor to submit themselves to those of superior rank and wealth. Nor was the state of things among the Dissenters much better. Although the influence of Wesley was at its height, owing to the ignorance of his followers, very contracted ideas of real religion and manly virtue were inculcated. By making the path to Heaven so narrow, many, despairing to be ever able to walk in it, threw off all religion and morality and sank into the abyss of vice and wickedness. The teaching of the Methodists was not the instruction of men who were masters of their subject, but the aimless talking of those who in their exultation at being furnished with a new idea, ran immediately to communicate it to their associates. It neither conveyed information nor taught the art of self-control, but on the contrary often brutalised the mob.

The name and cause of religion were however degraded to a still lower depth by a number of ignorant self-sufficient open air preachers. Lackington tells us that a good deal of preaching was practised in the open air at Smithfield and Moorfields on heaps

of stones, where the lazy section of the community set up stalls to buy and sell apples, old iron, and miscellaneous articles. Several of the occupants of those stalls, hearing numerous edifying discourses as they sat, pending the receipt of custom, and observing the success this kind of preacher met with, boldly resolved to make trial of their own spiritual gifts, and abandoning their stalls went forth as self-appointed ambassadors of heaven. One of the new apostles did not wholly depend on the operation of the Holy Spirit, and literally seldom began to preach till he was nearly drunk. This good man several times exerted himself rather too much, and nearly tumbled headlong out of his portable pulpit; this accident the mob uncharitably ascribed to liquor he had imbibed, and with mud, stones, and the dead bodies of domestic animals, drove him off every time he came, until at last he took his leave of them, saying it was in vain to attempt their conversion, as God had given them over to the hardness of their hearts.

In the same way that Horne's religious feeling and life were influenced by the abuses existing in the Church, and his desire for emancipation from it, intensified by the degradation of religion which he was constantly witnessing—so his political views and actions were largely biassed by the low state of morals and education prevailing at the time. It was impossible for a man of his nature to see unmoved the views which sprang from ignorance, without doing his utmost to bring about a better state of things. The following is a brief sketch of the social life of the period.

The small amount of education which the people received in the country was often at the hands of men taken out of prisons, which however was better than the Prussian system, according to which invalid soldiers who could not spell but only swear were appointed schoolmasters. Education had not penetrated the home of the squire. The house of a country gentleman who held the commission of the peace, might contain a marble chimney-piece but rarely any books, and if any, the following list was the most usual:—a Bible, Watt's psalms and hymns, Foot's tract on Baptism, Culpepper's Herbal, History of the Gentle Craft, a stray work on Surgery, and a Ready Reckoner. The master of the house might be a regular Church visitor on

Sunday, as an example ; regarding religion as a sort of adjunct to the law. His zeal might be carried so far as to fine rustics for swearing, while every third sentence of his own was attended by an oath that made the hearers shudder ; uncurbed blasphemy, to the rustic mind, being entirely the privilege of their betters.

The gross ignorance of the peasantry may be inferred from the testimony of William Huntington, the son of poor parents in Kent, who says,—“There was in our village an exciseman of stern and hard countenance, of whom I took notice for having a stick covered with figures and an ink-bottle hanging at his button-hole. This man I imagined to be employed by God Almighty to take account of children’s sins. I thought he must have a great deal to do to find out all the sins of the children, and I eyed him as a formidable being, and the greatest enemy I had in all the world.” The liberality of Huntington’s education may be considered a specimen of the general intelligence of the neighbourhood ; even respect for the ordinances of religion was not great, when one parish could only boast of the possession of a single Bible, and that not employed for spiritual instruction, but as a pedestal to support a flower-pot.

In the midst of this ignorance, gleams of higher life from time to time broke forth. Biographies of self-taught schoolmasters afforded interesting illustrations of the progress of learning. Two of the most extraordinary men of this class were Robert Hill, the learned tailor, and the notorious Eugene Aram, whose life supplied Bulwer with material for his celebrated novel. Price and Priestley are examples of high intellectual power among the Dissenting clergy.

Metropolitan manners during the first twenty-five years of the reign of George III., though animated with a purer morality than characterised the age preceding, were tinged with an amount of grossness painful to contemplate. The poor had scarcely any home, and no domestic privacy. An accurate picture of the home of the working classes is given by Lackington, an intelligent shoemaker, who ultimately raised himself by his industry to a position of affluence. Writing in 1774, he tells us :—“I saved money sufficient to bring my wife to town, and she had a pretty tolerable state of health ; of my master I obtained some

stuff-shoes for her to line, and nearly as much as she could do, and, as we had plenty of work and higher wages, we were tolerably easy in our circumstances, more so than we had ever been, so that we soon procured a few clothes. My wife had all her life before done very well with a superfine broadcloth cloak, but now I prevailed on her to have one with silk. Until the winter I never found out that I wanted a great coat, but now I made that important discovery, and my landlord showed me one made of a coarser kind of Bath coating, which he had purchased new at a shop in Rosemary Lane for ten shillings; so with the next half guinea away I went to Rosemary Lane." At this time a relation died leaving him ten pounds; part of it he lost, bringing it from the country; "with the remainder of the money," he continues, "we purchased household goods, but as we then had not sufficient to furnish a room, we worked hard and lived hard, so that in a short time we had a room furnished with our own goods, and I believe it is not possible for you to imagine with what pleasure and satisfaction we looked round the room and surveyed our property."

It is pathetic to notice this poor man's craving for knowledge and the sacrifices it entailed. One Christmas he had only two shillings and sixpence wherewith to purchase a dinner, and in going to buy it, encountered on a bookstall Young's "Night Thoughts," not now reckoned exhilarating reading, but then attractive enough to induce the poor cobbler to spend the whole sum upon it. Mrs. Lackington's comments on the investment are unfortunately missing. Some time after he ventured to rent a parlour and shop with the view of adding retail trade in old books to his shoemaking. "With this stock, a bag of old books, chiefly divinity, purchased for a guinea, and some odd scraps of leather, together with five pounds I opened a shop in Featherstone Street, in the parish of St. Luke's, and I was as well pleased in surveying my little shop, with my name over it, as was Nebuchadnezzar when he said, 'Is not this the great Babylon that I have built?'—and my good wife, after perceiving the pleasure that I took in my shop, piously cautioned me against setting my mind on the riches of this world, and assured me that it was all vanity. 'You are right, my dear,' I sometimes replied; 'and to keep our minds as spiritual as we can, we will always attend our class and board

meetings, and hear as many sermons on week days as possible, and on Sabbath days we will mind nothing but the good of our souls ; our small beer shall be fetched in on Saturday nights, nor will we even dress a potato on the Sabbath. We will attend the preaching at five o'clock in the morning, at eight go to prayer meeting, at ten to public worship ; hear Mr. Perry at Cripplegate at two, be at the Foundry (Wesley's old preaching house) at five ; meet with the general society at six, assemble at the United Bands at seven, and again prayer meeting at eight, and then come home and read and pray by ourselves.' ”

Notwithstanding this alarming bill of spiritual performance Lackington and his wife were neither morose nor ascetic. “ I open and shut my own shop,” he says, “ welcome a friend by a shake of the hand, at the same time beckon across the way for a pot of good porter.”

In those days a farm of one thousand acres in Norfolk was rented at £300 a year ; one of three thousand at £900, while many of the Essex farmers owned lands to the value of £300 or £400 a year, besides others which they rented. The farmers drank brandy and water on market days, just as at present, and the servants lived nearly on a footing of equality with their employers, all sitting down to the same table at meals. The labourers in many parts of the country were not entirely dependent upon agricultural industry ; they had the advantage of an immense extent of common lands. Many villages had still, in spite of numerous enclosures, large spaces of unenclosed land on which the sheep, cows, and geese of the poor found ample pasture. The great movement for enclosing common lands, the fruitful cause of much misery, belongs chiefly to the reign of George III., though it had commenced under his predecessor. Only two enclosure Acts had been passed under Anne, sixteen under George I., 226 in the reign of George II. ; while in the days of George III., more than 318,000 acres were enclosed or stolen from the poor.

The price of food from 1706 to 1730 was low ; mutton could be purchased for twopence halfpenny a pound, beef at the same rate, and for thirty years after, the price only advanced to three-pence the pound. Pork and veal, as well as beer, were equally

cheap. In 1768 the average weekly rate of agricultural wages for the whole year round was ten shillings a week within twenty miles of London, and proportionately less in places more remote from the capital. As improvements were introduced in agriculture, the common lands were enclosed, and, as may be supposed, all the advantages went to the surrounding landowners. Enclosure bills were introduced into Parliament which contained clauses providing compensation; these, however, in most cases were explained away by "the bloodhounds of the law," to the permanent disadvantage of the poor.

Agriculture then was in a most backward condition; no farmer had a wheeled cart, and burdens were conveyed on the backs of women, thirty or forty of whom might be seen in a line carrying heavy wicker creels. Women did the hard work, and it sometimes happened that if a man lost a horse or an ox, he married a wife as the cheapest plan to recoup himself.

In Lincolnshire the country was so desolate and thinly inhabited that land lighthouses were erected to guide the steps of the traveller over the marshes and plains. In the matter of vegetable production, not a turnip was seen north of the Humber till between the years 1760 and 1770.

In the midland and south-western counties, domestic manufactures were generally diffused, maintaining a mixed race of manufacturing and labouring class. The factory system had not yet concentrated manufactures into crowded towns. In Essex the work of crape and wool-combing was conducted, chiefly for the London market, giving employment to whole families, girls of seven and eight, and women being enabled to contribute to the family expenses. In Oxfordshire kerseys and coarse blankets were manufactured for the American market; women, girls, and old men of seventy found employment in various parts of the manufacture. Around Salisbury and Romsey, children were employed when very young in the manufacture of linseys and flannels. All these processes were carried on in the warehouses by the united efforts of the families, and the people resided sometimes in small country towns, sometimes in the open country. At Gloucester and Bristol there were pin manufactures. In Swansea a large number of men were employed in copper works.

In Birmingham, Watt and Bolton had given great extension to works employing large numbers of men under one roof. It was in Lancashire that the factory system originated; mining operations were conducted in the counties of Durham, Northumberland, and Cornwall.

Wherever domestic manufactures were introduced, the comparatively easy circumstances of the labouring classes had communicated to them a greater degree of softness and intelligence; the system of aggregate labour in factories had not been carried far enough to develop the peculiar influences; when it became further advanced it was seen to be the foe to health, beauty, and morals.

The education given by the universities was as sadly deficient as that of the lower classes, in degree, when viewed from the standpoint of the present day. Lord Eldon tells us of the examination for the degree in Oxford where Hebrew and history were the subjects. "What is the Hebrew for skull?"—"Golgotha."—"Who was the founder of the university?"—"King Alfred."—"Very well, sir; you are competent for your degree." This occurred, remember, in the year 1770. The statutes required that students should translate familiar phrases in Latin; some of the questions consisted of an inquiry into the pedigree of a race-horse. Dean Swift, referring to a short time before this, says that he heard one or two men of rank declare that they could have learned nothing more at Oxford or Cambridge than to drink ale and smoke tobacco. Dean Aldrich, of Christ Church, was an habitual smoker. A student once visited the Dean at ten o'clock in the morning, having laid a wager that he would find him in the act of smoking. The Dean said good-humouredly: "You see, sir, you have lost your wager, for I'm not smoking; I'm filling my pipe."

The vice of drinking was prevalent even among the clergy. Lord Eldon tells a story of a Doctor of Divinity whom he knew so far the worse for convivial entertainment that he was unable to walk home without leaning for support with his hands upon the wall, but having by accident staggered to the rotunda of the Radcliffe Library, which was not yet protected by a railing, he continued to go round and round, wondering at the unwonted

length, but still revolving and supposing he went straight, until some friend—perhaps the chancellor himself—relieved him from his embarrassment and set him on his way.

Drinking was known in the days of Elizabeth ; as Englishmen returned from the wars in the Holy Land, they brought with them a taste for music and songs, and also the habit of drinking. There was a good deal of it in the days of Anne, but it did not become the national vice till the Hanoverian dynasty. Nor was the habit confined to men. A passage in the life of Mrs. Pilkington, one of the ladies of the Court, throws some light on the habits of the women of her time. She says :—" I was sprinkling some flower-pots before the dining-room window. Colonel Duncomb, the Duke of Bolton, and the Earl of Winchelsea, stood at the club-window, filling out wine and drinking to me, so I took up my pen full in their view, and, as I was not acquainted with any of them except the Colonel, I sent over these lines :—

" Your rosy wine
Looks bright and fine,
But yet it does not cheer me ;
The cause I guess
Is surely this :
The bottle is not near me.
You show that sight to give delight,
If I may fairly judge ye ;
But would you move
My wit or love,
I beg, sir, I may pledge ye."

Lord Winchelsea bade the Colonel send me all the wine on the table. ' Ah,' said the Colonel, ' that might injure her health ; I'll send her a bottle of Burgundy to cheer her spirits.' Accordingly, the waiter brought it ; the noblemen all gathered to the window, and the waiter filled me a glass, which, making them a low reverence, I drank and retired."

The vice of drinking also spread among the lower classes to an extent now hardly credible. London then was not a third of the size it is at present, yet drinking-houses were more numerous in proportion. There was in some parishes a gin-shop to every seventh house, besides which liquor was sold in stalls and from

wheelbarrows in the streets, just as apples and oranges are now vended. One enterprising publican in Southwark went so far as to invite custom by placing on his signboard, words which not only indicated the cheapness and abundance of the supply of drink, but testified a tender and thoughtful consideration for the comfort of his guests when reduced to that state which the policeman designates as incapable. They were as follows :—

Drunk for 1d.

Dead drunk for 2d.

Clean straw for nothing !

In 1750 more than eleven million gallons of spirits were annually consumed. The pictures of Hogarth show how demoralised the people had become from this vice. The habit of drinking toasts began at the Restoration ; to abolish this senseless custom, I would advise the Blue Ribbon Army to level their heaviest artillery, as there is no reason in maintaining it in modern life. Coffee was not introduced till the end of the century, and had some influence in diminishing the taste for strong drink. The modern revival of coffee-houses is a laudable attempt to promote sobriety among the working classes, but owing to bad management or rapacity in requiring too large a return for the amount spent on them, they are more likely to drive people back to strong drink, as a contrast from the wretched, nauseous stuff sold as coffee : a compound which is brewing in a copper all day, overcharged with bad milk and sugar, and dealt over the counter with the unwashed hands of attendants entirely wanting in courtesy. I have personally visited several of these coffee palaces, and having tasted the villainous compound sold under this name, take the opportunity of calling attention to its defects, in the hope that they may be corrected.

The passion for gambling—that is, for obtaining money without toil—is rooted in human nature. During the Georgian period this was carried to a great excess. The example of the higher classes had spread downwards, so much so that cards of directions were thrown down the areas to corrupt the servants. Women gambled as much as men. While the master and mistress were indulging this passion in the drawing-room, their dependants were shuffling cards on the stairs, or betting in the kitchens.

State lotteries ranked among the sources of revenue, and in the year 1788 this disgraceful and demoralising traffic brought to the Government a clear annual gain of £260,000. This lottery madness was carried on both day and night. A traveller to London in 1755, observed "that he could not help looking with displeasure at the number of paper lanterns that dangled from the doors of lottery offices, considering them false lights hung out to draw fools to destruction." In 1736 Westminster Bridge was built, chiefly from the produce of lotteries, and the Sloane collection and Harleian MSS. were also purchased by the same means. These formed the foundation of the British Museum, then called Montague House, behind which many a duel was fought in those days.

Gambling is one of those vices which has held the firmest grip of the English people. To-day, most of the young men on trams and omnibuses, on their way to their respective offices in the city, read the sporting papers. Every newspaper in the kingdom panders to this gambling spirit by giving columns to this one subject; boys in the board schools keep betting books, and the gossip of the barber's shop shows how keenly the same passion has gripped the vitals of the working classes. From the Cabinet minister down to the street Arab, the passion is the same. In the beginning of the eighteenth century, young men took their sweethearts into shops and treated them to gloves and trinkets, not disposed of by regular sale but by raffle; and the purchase of the smallest article was accompanied by the gift of a ticket to some lottery. The very fruit stalls in the streets were places for gambling, where dice and the wheel of fortune initiated apple-munching urchins into the doctrine of chance. Society then resembled one vast casino, while even the Church was not exempt from the influence.

Between the years 1760 and 1785 there was an utter want of efficient police control; murders, robbery, and riot were constantly going on. Highwaymen ranked as gentlemen, and became so daring that they posted handbills at the gates of the residences of many known rich men in London, forbidding them, on pain of death, to travel from town without a watch or with less than ten guineas in money. Highway robbery had reached its height as recently as the close of the American war. Rewards

were indiscriminately offered for the apprehension of such offenders. Men out of employment were thus tempted to make an honest penny by having a sharp look out for this class. "I keep a shop in Wych Street, and sometimes catch a thief," was the answer of a witness in a case of highway robbery, when questioned as to his profession. One can easily imagine the evil effects of this irregular method of police supervision.

CHAPTER II.

A WEAK GOVERNMENT.

Accession of George III.—Prerogative—A Game of Whist—Lord Bute—A Royal Scandal—Struggle between Crown and Aristocracy—The Party of the People—Bute's Policy—Borough-mongering—Origin of Public Meetings—Expulsion of Wilkes—Middlesex Election—Horne's Political Writing—Dares Prosecution—Early Life of Wilkes—Repartee—The Medmenham Club—A Practical Joke—Lord Sandwich—Bute and Pitt—The Peace of Paris—Popular Indignation—Subsidising the Press—The *North Briton*—Wilkes on Liberty—Hatred of Scotland—Lord Talbot's Horse—The Poet Churchill—Resignation of Bute—No. 45—"The Kingly Office"—General Warrants—The Law Officers of the Crown—Arrest of Printers—Wilkes sent to the Tower—Government Evasion—Habeas Act—Chief Justice Pratt—Triumph of Wilkes—Popular Enthusiasm—Hostility of the Government.

GEORGE, the third king of that name, had mounted the throne amid the pomp and rejoicings of his people. Never did a prince receive a more cordial welcome from a generous people, and never was their faith more cowardly betrayed. They rejoiced over this king, for he spoke their language, boasted of being a Briton, and reflected both the sympathies and the antipathies of the least presentable of the middle classes. They gloried exceedingly in the piety of a monarch who, at his coronation exhibited the reverence of removing his crown, while kneeling to take the Sacrament. Perhaps the conduct of his grandfather on a similar occasion was not forgotten. His main anxiety, when he partook of that most sacred rite, was that the sermon should be short, otherwise, to use his own words, "he was in danger of falling asleep and catching cold." This over solicitous potentate entertained no high opinion of his grandson. "The boy is good for nothing but to read the Bible to his mother," was his form of eulogy, which fairly represents the

second George's sense of value of the Divine Record, without doing any violence to the strength of the family affection.

The piety of George III. was of a more robust character ; he rebuked the fulsome adulation of Wilson, prebendary of Westminster, with the words, "I go to church, sir, to hear God praised, and not myself," words which won the hearts of the people and travelled farther than he ever expected. Never did the people falter in their allegiance to this monarch, for though mountains of debt and rivers of blood marked his reign, the juggling of statesmen and the diplomacy of ministers concealed the promoter. None of the Stuarts were so successful in enforcing their obstinate wills upon the people as he who, when foiled in his ambition and bankrupt in health and character, obtained the title of "the good old king."

The people knew nothing of this new Prince till he was called to rule over them. He was brought up in the seclusion of his mother's home, and from this lady derived his first impressions of government. The Princess was no favourite with the people, and nothing was said of her ability ; she, however, was a woman of superior mind, and had been educated in the court of her father, the Duke of Saxe-Gotha, where she had been accustomed to see the unrestrained exercise of sovereign power, in a very different way from what she found it in England. In Saxe-Gotha sovereignty is property, in Great Britain it is magistracy. A petty German sovereign is not so much a magistrate as proprietor both of the soil and of the inhabitants. Such were the principles which the Princess of Wales instilled into the mind of her son, and all his learned English advisers, whether legal or clerical, who stood round his throne, were not strong enough to efface them.

The perverse and obstinate desire of the King to be his own Prime Minister and to carry out his own schemes of government, which proved so disastrous to the nation, was prompted, not by vanity, but by a narrow though honest ambition to promote the welfare of his people. He saw that the first two monarchs of the House of Hanover had suffered a succession of irritating checks from the few distinguished families who were instrumental in placing them on the throne, and from this humiliation he naturally

wished to emancipate himself. His policy was not to invite the ablest men into his council, but to suppress the great constitutional party whose leading principle had been to restrain monarchical power. The new King, free from all foreign partialities, calculated on the sympathy of the people to enable him to shake off the Whig domination which had oppressed his predecessors, and had he not outraged their prejudices, he might have been successful in his scheme. He, however, went the wrong way to work, for after ejecting Pitt, who was the popular idol, he called to his assistance his old tutor, the Earl of Bute, who, if devoted to his King's interests, was not regardless of his own.

He devised a scheme for investing the King with the power once wielded by the Stuarts. Jacobitism was now dead; the Pretender was languishing in Italy, and his son, a slave to the family vices, was not likely to survive his royal father. The Whigs had grown apathetic and were now utterly disorganised. Bute, an astute Scotchman, gauging the situation, contemplated appealing for support to the Tories, long excluded from, and now thirsting for office, and by their help causing a fusion of parties. The new policy was to exalt the royal prerogative, and to accomplish this end the Minister did not disdain the old method of wholesale bribery.

Bute, however, was not the man to carry this great scheme into effect. In addition to the great unpopularity of his manners, he had no connection with any of the great English families, such as the Bentincks, Manners, Campbells, Cavendishes, Fitzroys, Lennoxes, Russells, and Granvilles; Whig noblemen, who were mainly instrumental in setting the line of Hanover on the throne, which gave them a claim to power. Prejudices were easily excited against him as a native of Scotland for, only a short time before, a rebellion had broken out in that country and raged through the heart of England. The Scotch were considered foreigners and Jacobites, entirely wanting in sympathy with the principles of the Revolution. Bute's partiality to Scotchmen was so notorious that a disappointed wit, who had long attended his levees, to no purpose, once said to him, "If your lordship would but make me a Scotchman, you would ensure my gratitude for ever."

Bute's own acquaintance with royalty was the result of an accident. Frederick, Prince of Wales happened to go to a cricket-match. In the midst of the sport it began to rain, and the shower compelled the Prince to retire to his tent, where he intimated a wish to play a game of whist until the weather became fair again. For some time nobody could be found to take the fourth hand. One of the gentlemen in waiting saw Lord Bute and asked him to complete the Prince's party. The invitation was of course accepted; and the Prince felt so pleased with the manners of his companion who, we suppose, could adapt them to please royalty upon occasion, as to desire him to pay him an early visit to Kew, where his Royal Highness then resided. The Prince never entertained a high opinion of Bute's ability. He said he was a fine showy man, who could make an excellent ambassador in a Court where there was no business. But his Royal Consort did not share this opinion, for after the Prince's death, the Scotchman was taken into the complete confidence of the widow, and in a short time absolutely ruled the establishment. Rumour assigned this intimacy to the existence of tenderer feelings on the part of the Princess. It is necessary to mention this, not that the slightest credence should be attached to it, but because the scandal about the Princess was widely circulated. For years it was a familiar practice with the London mob to burn a petticoat and a jack-boot, the symbols under which the people designated the King's mother and his favourite.

A Court favourite is always unpopular, and Bute was particularly odious to his equals and to the people at large. He was supposed to dictate every word the King said, and to prompt him in everything that he did. At last he became so disliked that he could no longer appear in the streets without a hired gang of bruisers to protect him. A second reason for his unpopularity was this—Bute was credited with a desire to supplant Pitt, whom the people delighted to honour, as the purest of all the statesmen of his day, as well as the most conspicuously successful in all his undertakings.

The indications of popular esteem which greeted the accession of George III. were not long lived. The Commons voted him a clear annual income of £800,000 for the maintenance of the

household and the civil lists ; they also granted supplies amounting to nineteen millions. On the other hand, steps were taken by Parliament towards limiting the prerogative of the Crown, by securing the independence of the judges, who were henceforth to hold their commissions for life, without being subject to change, even at the demise of the Crown, as previously. When the King married, Buckingham Palace was conferred on his wife in exchange for her right to Somerset House, then about to be converted into public offices. Nothing was wanting to prove the favour with which the King was received.

It was during the struggle between the Crown and the aristocracy that the third Party—the party of the people—sprang into existence. The people began to find out that they had an interest in the country, and also that they had the capacity to save those institutions, which had been intended for better things, from becoming a prey to the wrangles and intrigues of courts and factions.

Since the presentation of the Kentish petition in the reign of William III. there had been, from time to time, upheavings of the popular feelings against the doings of the Legislature, which kept up the tradition that Parliament existed in order to represent the nation. But these had all been so associated with ignorance and violence, as to make it difficult for men of sense to look with favour on the emancipation of the House of Commons from aristocratic control. The Sacheverell riots, the attacks on the Excise Bill, and the violent advocacy of the Spanish War, were not likely to encourage thoughtful men to place real power in the hands of the classes from whom such exhibitions of folly proceeded. But the movement for economical reform in the days of George III. was very different from that maintained in the days of Queen Anne. The agitation for modern reform was carried on in a sober manner and with a definite practical object ; and asked no more than the King ought to have been willing to concede. It attacked useless expenditure, sinecures, and unnecessary offices in the household, the only effect of which was to spread abroad corruption among the aristocracy. At this time the middle classes were roused from political slumber. During the long administration of the Whigs,

they had been silent, but they noted what was taking place, and were ready for action when the opportunity offered. It was Toryism which called this energy into existence.

Lord Bute concluded with France a peace which was considered dishonourable by all statesmen, except the few engaged in framing the measure. His distribution of patronage also produced a murmur of discontent, which could not be mistaken. His immediate relatives alone monopolised a sum of £50,000 a year out of the national purse. The Tories clustered round the throne, as flies haunt a sugar hogshead; they occupied all the offices in the household; possessed every avenue to the Court; and their number was daily increased by those who valued the favour of the King more than the good of the country. The Minister of the day was always sure of a majority in Parliament, for the state of the representation was such, that many of the boroughs had been bought up by the Treasury, and were at the disposal of every successive ministry. If the candidate, after paying his money at some of these sham elections, could show only a piece of a shirt, the Committees declared him duly qualified. Some boroughs had been purchased by jobbers upon speculation, and let to the highest bidders at the rate of about £4,000 each, generally to those who could reckon upon recovering their purchase money from the national coffers. Borough representation was a mere speculation, an undisguised traffic, by which men were returned to Parliament, to increase the gains of the capitalist. Officials from the East and West Indies who, having passed their lives in an atmosphere of despotism, and amassed fabulous fortunes by all sorts of tyranny, were glad to invest a portion of it, in return for a title or some Court favour for themselves or their wives. It is needless to say that these men had no interest in the country or in the welfare of the people.

This corruption, however, failed to silence the widespread discontent. Force, the old weapon of Toryism, followed by imprisonments, seizures, and military massacres, was next tried, but without the desired effect. The general dissatisfaction caused a revulsion in the popular feeling which became universal. In England, the first sign of public discontent was seen in the organisation of public meetings. These began in 1769 and have

continued ever since. To this date may be attributed the birth of Radicalism, for it was through these gatherings that the people first declared their newly-acquired consciousness of power. In them, energy and talent gave importance to the humblest tradesman; the rights of the industrious classes were discussed, and every individual in the nation began to feel that he had an interest in the politics of the State. This spirit of independence, kindled in England, spread to America, and led to the disruption of the Colonies; Toryism again supplying the torch. The throes and convulsions which preceded the birth of this new party in England, were exhibited by a strong disposition to discard the political creeds of both established parties, and perhaps by a good deal of extravagant declamation—a sort of blank cartridge causing more alarm than danger—the new party disencumbered themselves at once of all veneration for ancient usages and established formulas, and employed themselves in devising a reformation which should reduce the constitution to a state of theoretical perfection. The difference between this new party and the existing Whigs was that the Radicals were reformers in the gross, while the others were so only in detail; the former declared war against all abuses, the latter only attacked them when they became unbearable. But long possession of power had benumbed the faculties of the Whigs and paralysed their energies; they now reposed in luxuriousness and idleness, as useless as forgotten shells on a battlefield. The old Whigs owed their power to the fidelity with which they maintained their principles, and for these they had fought during two hundred years. The right of free government, conscience, and liberty of speech had been declared in 1688, but it was not definitely established until taken up by the Radicals, then called Reformers, during the Georgian period.

The chief difficulty with which the new party had to contend was mainly owing to the large schemes they undertook, ordinary minds being unable to understand reforms of so comprehensive a character. Hence the professors of the doctrines were called enthusiasts, and met with formidable opposition from the middle classes who had property to lose. On the other hand, the mere populace who possessed nothing tangible, readily yielded credence to the authority of able conscientious men.

Such was the social and political condition of England, which must have engaged the attention of thoughtful men in the early part of George III.'s reign. Foremost among these was the Rev. John Horne, vicar of New Brentford, who, it must be borne in mind, had entered the Church with reluctance, owing to the persuasion of his parents. For several years he continued to discharge the duties of his office with credit; but the proceedings against Wilkes in 1769, and the refusal to accept him as a member after his re-election, raised a grave constitutional question, in which the Ministry and the House of Commons were wholly in the wrong. These proceedings against Wilkes, and the national enthusiasm they awakened, aroused the political passions which had long been dormant in Horne's breast. The Middlesex election brought the scene before his eyes, and the actors to his door. The temptation could no longer be resisted; squibs, puns, paragraphs, letters, and essays flowed with ceaseless rapidity from his pen, and were readily printed by the London newspapers. As he proceeded, he grew more ardent in the cause; he published a violent pamphlet in which he avowed himself a candidate for the honours of the pillory, and invoked the vengeance of the Ministry. The charges he made on the Government in this effusion were pitched a note higher than the common sense of our day would justify. Just then, Lord Bute had ousted the favourite Pitt, and the nation was angry when it saw the former achieve a position to which he had no claim, and who possessed neither the character nor the ability to initiate a policy advantageous to the people. Prejudice against his country and strictures against his morals caused a violent excitement, which the Government tried to put down by force.

Horne dared the Government to an attack by expressing the feelings of the national mind in the strong and fervid language of the times, coupling with his denunciation a drawing of Lord Bute's private house, and exhibiting its proximity to that of the Princess of Wales, whose intimacy with that nobleman was the theme of the town. "Even I, my countrymen," he writes, "who now address you; I, who at present blessed with peace and happiness, a fair character, and easy fortune, am at this moment forfeiting them all; soon must I be beggared, vilified, and im-

prisoned. The hounds of power unkennelled and laid upon the scent, they will track out my footsteps from my very cradle, and if I shall be found once to have set my foot awry—it is enough— instant they open upon me. My private faults shall justify their public infamy, and the follies of my youth be pleaded in defence of their right of villany. Spirits of Hampden, Russell, and Sydney, animate my countrymen !”

The prosecution, eagerly courted, did not follow ; perhaps the very boldness of the challenge, coupled with the allusion to the Princess, prevented its acceptance. But every step of Horne’s eventful life proved that this startling announcement was not a *vox et preterea nihil*.

A name inseparably connected with his is that of John Wilkes, to whom the English people are much indebted. Horne was the principal agent and mover in the struggle which led to the enlargement of the press, and in procuring for the people that concession which, although now the commonest feature of our everyday life, was then both great and novel—the liberty of publishing the debates in Parliament. Wilkes, as magistrate, aided him, and got the full credit of the transaction ; they also checked arbitrary power, whether exercised by monarch or ministry, from encroaching on the personal liberty of the subject.

John Wilkes, born in 1727, was the son of a distiller, who, after having amassed a large fortune, resided in the county of Buckingham. The elder Mr. Wilkes was a strict Dissenter. He sent his son to Leyden to be educated, as the Act of Uniformity excluded him from the English Universities. As a Dissenter, Wilkes was trained in those principles of civil and religious liberty which he always steadily maintained. When he was twenty-two years of age he contracted a marriage with an heiress, daughter of Doctor Mead, the leading physician of the day. Later on he thus defined their relative positions,—“In my nonage, to please an indulgent father, I married a woman half as old again as myself, of large fortune, my own being that of a gentleman. It was a sacrifice to Plutus, not to Venus. I stumbled at the threshold.” Wilkes soon grew tired of this ill-assorted marriage, and to forget the tie that bound him, plunged into all kinds of dissipation. Miss Mead did not marry him for

his good looks, for he was ugly and squinted detestably, but so agreeable and insinuating was his address, that more than one fair lady, as she listened, found herself forgetting his sinister squint and ill-favoured countenance. He used to say himself, in a laughing strain, that though he was the ugliest man in England, he wanted nothing to make him even with the handsomest but an hour's start. However, it may be said that his remarkable wit and astounding impudence were aftergrowths. The young couple took up their abode in London, where a daughter was born, and where, if Wilkes had been obliged to work for his living, they might have been happy. As it was, he first lived on his wife's fortune, and afterwards on his wits. In London, he became intimate with the most licentious men of the day, called, in the phrase of the time, "men of wit and pleasure." Amongst them were Sir Francis Dashwood, Lord Sandwich, Sir William Stanhope, Paul Whitehead, and Thomas Potter, son of the Archbishop of Canterbury; all men who would have been acceptable to no woman of good character, least of all to one who was, like Mrs. Wilkes, pious, severe, and parsimonious. As might have been expected, the husband and wife separated by mutual consent; he stipulating to pay her an annuity of £200. Of this, to his great disgrace, he tried to deprive her. Ultimately he was restrained only by a threat that he would be committed for contempt by the Court of Chancery, unless he desisted from annoying his wife.

Wilkes was no orator, but he was unrivalled in repartee; one of his companions tells us that "wit was so constantly at his command that wagers have been gained, that from the time he quitted his house till he reached Guildhall, no one could address him or would leave him without a smile or a hearty laugh. On the authority of M. Louis Blanc, it is said that a number of his sayings are still repeated and admired in France, just as the wit of Sydney Smith is treasured by us. His bright conversation charmed away the prejudice of such a Tory as Dr. Johnson; fascinated Hannah Moore, and won the gloomy Lord Mansfield, who said, "Mr. Wilkes is the pleasantest companion, the politest gentleman, and the best scholar I know." His ingenuity elicited a similar testimony. "If," said one who knew him, "he were stripped naked and thrown over Westminster Bridge on one day,

he would be met the next in Pall Mall, dressed in the height of the fashion, and with money in his pocket." A man so highly gifted did not want for acquaintance; one of those already mentioned was Sir Francis Dashwood, who possessed a fortune large enough to enable him to pursue any pleasures he desired, and, being cloyed with common amusements, was ambitious to distinguish himself among his companions by striking out something new. Mere gratification of the senses, not answering his design, he thought it would be a novelty to play off his wit on religion, the common butt of his day. To accomplish this questionable end, he hired and repaired an old Cistercian religious house, called Medmenham Abbey, situated on the banks of the Thames, near Marlow in Buckinghamshire, in the midst of lovely scenery, where flowing water gleams in silver flashes, between green meadows and wooded heights. This place constituted a fairy scene of beauty, worthy of better deeds. Here, with some boon companions, of whom Wilkes was one, Dashwood established a club, known as the Medmenham Monks, which met to parody the dress and rules of the Franciscan Order. They gave themselves up to the most profane debauchery, affected to do reverence to the statue of the Venus de Medicis, and, adopted the rule of Rabellais, "*fait ce que voudras*." This brotherhood of profligates travestied the services of the Church, and each had his cell, a proper habit, and a monastic name. There was a refectory in common, besides a chapel, the decorations of which may well be supposed to have contained the quintessence of their mysteries, since it was impenetrable to any but the initiated. The members spent a portion of each year in the Abbey, inhabiting the cells, feasting in the great hall, and singing blasphemous songs. To prevent satiety, these meetings were never protracted beyond a week at a time, nor held oftener than twice a year. The expense was defrayed jointly by the whole community; the slaves of their lust being sent back to the brothels from which they had been brought, and the servants discharged at the end of the season. To be one of the twelve who played a leading part in their blasphemous orgies, was the ambition of men of fashion in those days, and required on the part of the successful competitor a certain pre-eminence in wickedness. A

vacancy having occurred, two men who had undergone their novitiate, competed for the honour of election. They were Lord Sandwich and John Wilkes. As the greater reprobate of the two, Lord Sandwich was chosen. Wilkes avenged himself by a practical joke, which was never forgiven by one, at least, of the community. He confined a baboon, dressed to represent the Evil One, within a chest in the room which held the ornaments and utensils of the table over which he had charge. While the revellers were feasting and uttering impious jests, Wilkes let loose the animal by means of a cord attached to the cover of the box, the end of which was artfully concealed under his chair, at the very moment Lord Sandwich was invoking his Master the Devil. The baboon, as terrified as the most awe-stricken of the party, bounded into the room, and by chance leaped upon Lord Sandwich's shoulder. The consternation was indescribable; the company believed that the Devil in person had answered the summons. There was a general stampede among those who were not too drunk to rise to their feet. Fearing at the moment his end was come, the wicked nobleman recanted his former utterance, protesting that he did not mean what he said, and praying to Heaven for mercy with all the fervour of a cowardly sinner. A window being open, the baboon escaped through it, and the revellers recovered their spirits and resumed their orgy; but Lord Sandwich never forgave Wilkes for the fright, and especially the ridicule it had procured him. After this incident, popular feeling became so strong against the monks that it was considered prudent to dissolve the society; for the adventure was noised abroad and lost nothing in repetition. The founder some years afterwards built a church, and selected the top of the hill for its site, because an edifice placed there looked well from the windows of his house. Whereupon Wilkes wrote, "Some churches have been built from devotion, others from parade and vanity; I believe this is the first church which has been built for a prospect.

The follies of these gentlemen of fashion might have escaped the eye of the public, and certainly would not be worth chronicling, were it not that the Minister of the day, Lord Bute, selected Lord Sandwich as his Chancellor of the Exchequer, from this

seminary of piety. The incompetence of this hereditary legislator in finance, was so notorious as to give occasion to one of the wits of the day describing the noble lord as "a man to whom a sum of five figures was an impenetrable mystery." He made the most extraordinary Budget speech on record, but he had one virtue: he was conscious of his own incapacity, and when sent up among the peers to adorn the Upper House with his appearance and the graces of his manner, he correctly predicted that the people would point at him and say—"There goes the worst Chancellor of the Exchequer that ever lived."

In 1754 Wilkes aimed at entering Parliament, and stood for Berwick-upon-Tweed, without success. He polled 192 votes at the cost of nearly £5,000, over £26 per vote! In 1757 he was elected for Aylesbury. Towards the end of George II.'s reign, the borough had been represented by Potter, his companion in the Medmenham stew, who received the appointment of Vice-treasurer of Ireland. Just then, Mr. Pitt exchanged the membership of the small borough of Oakhampton, for the more important one of Bath, and Potter became his successor. This election cost Mr. Wilkes £7,000, and involved him in debt. Pitt was then in the height of his popularity; and when Wilkes took his seat in Parliament, his first act was a formal tender of his support to the popular Minister, avowing that "his ambition will ever be to have his Parliamentary conduct approved by the ablest Minister as well as by the first character of the age."

The absorbing ambition which George III. brought to the Crown, was the extension of the royal prerogative. Bute seemed to him a fitting instrument to further the design, and the King took the first opportunity of placing him at the head of affairs. In doing so, he was only carrying out the early instructions given him by the favourite and his mother, who had instilled these narrow notions into his head. As Secretary of State, Pitt pursued a most vigorous policy. Abroad, he made the name of England respected, and added substantially to her territory. Canada was rescued from France, and Spain was made to yield up Havana and the Philippine Islands. At home, drastic reforms were contemplated, and popular liberty cherished. This policy the King was determined to reverse. His jealous spirit grudged the

expense of the wars Pitt had in view, and the subsidies by which he bribed the friendship of the great Frederick. But the carrying out of the King's design involved a costly sacrifice of England's foreign possessions, so that the King and his new Minister, in making peace with France and Spain, had to face a relentless storm of unpopularity.

The Peace of Paris was signed on the 28th November, 1762, and it was necessary that the assent of Parliament should be obtained on any terms. It was, in fact, purchased by the most bare-faced bribery. The 29th November, the day on which it was presented to Parliament, bank notes flew about by thousands, for the open purchase of votes. In hundred pound notes alone, the sum of £2,500, was, that morning, distributed to members, the only stipulation made with them being—"Give in your vote." The whole outlay spent in obtaining the measure was £60,000. How the success that crowned this base expenditure of public money was regarded in the royal circle, may be estimated from the congratulatory exclamation of the Dowager Princess of Wales: "Now, George, you are King!" which, rendered into common language, no doubt meant, "Your Parliament is purchasable, and can at any time be made subservient to your designs."

A peace, viewed as ignominious by the vast majority of the nation, coupled with the retirement of the popular Minister, who had hitherto so ably guided their destinies, raised the wildest ferment of excitement and indignation throughout England. The Bute Ministry, prescient of the storm, made a weak bid for popular support by the subsidy of the press. It sought to corrupt this channel of public opinion, by hiring the support of venal pens. Smollett, who, despite his splendid genius as a novelist, was a political hireling of the least respectable type, and Murphy, the dramatist, were the instruments used. Smollett started the *Briton* on the very day Lord Bute was installed, and a fortnight later, Murphy issued the *Auditor*; both were conducted at the expense of the Ministry. The first echoes of these hireling scribes had scarcely died away when another publication issued from the press, which engaged universal attention. The *North Briton*, edited by Wilkes, appeared on the Saturday after the *Briton*. Wilkes thoroughly measured the altered aspect of

public affairs, and foresaw the perils which the liberty of the people had to encounter from corruption. He knew what he was contending for; the occasion was critical, but he faced its difficulties, and flung himself into the breach, to contend single-handed for the birthright of the Commonwealth. The first sentence of the *North Briton* indicated the danger of the policy which had been inaugurated. "The liberty of the press is the birthright of the Briton, and is justly esteemed the firmest bulwark of the liberties of this country. It has been the terror of all bad ministers, for their dark, dangerous designs, or their weakness, inability, and duplicity, have thus been detected and shown to the public, generally in too strong and just colours for them to long bear up against the odium of mankind. Can we be surprised that so various and infinite arts have been employed at one time entirely to set aside, at another to take off the force and blunt the edge of this most sacred weapon, given for the defence of truth and liberty? A wicked and corrupt administration must naturally dread this appeal to the world; and will be for keeping all the means of information equally from the prince, the parliament, and the people. Every method will be tried, and all arts put in practice to check the spirit of knowledge and inquiry. Even the courts of justice have in a most dangerous way, because under the sanction of law, been drawn in to second the dark views of an arbitrary Ministry, and to stifle in the birth all infant virtue. From this motive in former times, the King's Bench has inflicted the most grievous punishments of fine, pillory, or imprisonment, or perhaps all three, on some who have stood forth the champions of their country, and whose writings have been the honour of their age and nation."

Mr. Wilkes, in the *North Briton*, intensified at every step the indignation which the English people were made to feel at the elevation of Lord Bute, who was regarded as a parvenu, placed over the heads of the proud nobility of England. The spirit with which the *North Briton* attacked the administration, soon procured it a wide circulation, while the style in which it was written was something altogether new. The manner of the writer was clear and his diction homely, but it was racy and pungent. It constantly seemed to reach the pitch of audacity.

Readers were dazzled with it; and the malice of mankind was gratified by the poison of the sting. A century ago, men had no scruple in blackening their political rivals, and even men in high station used language towards each other which would now hardly be employed at the bar of an East End music-hall. Wilkes used the plainest words to disclose the most discreditable deeds, and was most vehement in his abuse of Scotland. Playing on the popular jealousy of foreigners and Scotchmen, he said "that the river Tweed was the line of demarcation between all that was noble and all that was base—south of the river was all honour, virtue, and patriotism—north of it, was nothing but lying, malice, meanness, and slavery. Scotland is a treeless, flowerless land, formed out of the refuse of the universe, and inhabited by the very bastards of creation; where famine had fixed her chosen throne; where a scant population, gaunt with hunger and hideous with dirt, spent their wretched days in brooding over the fallen fortunes of their native dynasty, and in watching with mingled envy and hatred the mighty nation that subdued them."

Wilkes led the popular movement and became the mouthpiece of the existing discontent; he attacked the Court party with an audacity that had been rarely paralleled, and introduced, for the first time in political writing, the practice of printing the names of the chief persons in the State at full length, instead of indicating them by initials, a custom which had hitherto prevailed. "The highest names," said Walpole, "whether of statesmen or magistrates, were printed at length, and insinuations went still higher." Wilkes exactly hit the mental level of the people, and perhaps no one living better understood the false temper of the Bute administration, than the man who now stood forth to champion the people's rights. In the twelfth number of the *North Briton* he attacked the pensioners of the Government; amongst these was Doctor Johnson, the great lexicographer. Never was any stipend more deservedly earned by literary merit than in his case. But Lord Bute can scarcely be defended for having granted a similar pension to Shebbeare, or for having refused a professorship to Gray. Earl Talbot was also among the pensioners. The famous services of his horse became the subject of some good-humoured banter. Wilkes wrote, "What the exact proportion of merit was between

his lordship and his horse, and how far the pension should be divided among them, I will not take it upon me to say. . . . In my private opinion, however, the merit of both was very great, and neither ought to pass unnoticed. Some of the regulations of the courtiers themselves, for that day, had long been settled by former lord stewards. It was reserved for Lord Talbot to settle an etiquette for their horses."

Here, Wilkes was referring to an incident at the coronation, over which Lord Talbot presided, and for which occasion he had taken some pains to teach his horse to back gracefully from the royal presence. When the great event occurred, the animal forgot his manners, and, becoming confused, insisted upon going in backward to the great Hall at Westminster, to the infinite amusement of the spectators, and was with difficulty prevented, at the crowning part of the ceremonial, from presenting his hind quarters to royalty.

Lord Talbot challenged Wilkes for the ridicule with which he treated this incident. Wilkes, not deficient in what was deemed at the time gentlemanly spirit, accepted the challenge. The duel came off by moonlight in the garden of the Red Lion Inn, Bagshot, on October 4th, 1763, and shots were exchanged without any bloodshed. Lord Talbot was so favourably impressed with the temper and pluck which Wilkes displayed that he declared him on the spot, "the noblest fellow God ever made;" and to show that they parted the best of friends, invited him to the inn to drink a bottle of claret, "which," said Wilkes, "we did with great good humour, and much laughter."

After this, the *North Briton* ran its course unchecked up to the forty-fourth number, April 2nd, 1768. In conducting it, Wilkes had the active co-operation of the poet Churchill, a young man of genius, who was fascinated by the early reputation Wilkes had obtained, and who, like Horne, would doubtless have severed the connection had he lived long enough. The poet joined heartily with Wilkes in abusing Scotland.

The great object of the *North Briton* was secured by the resignation of Lord Bute and the advent of George Grenville, brother-in-law of Pitt and brother of Temple; Wilkes availed himself of the occasion to visit Paris, where his daughter was being

educated. On his return to London, calling on Lord Temple, he found him in company with Mr. Pitt, and both were engaged in earnest conversation on the forthcoming Speech from the Throne, to be delivered next day. The earl had a copy beforehand, through the polite consideration of his brother, the Prime Minister. Both speakers had proof, from the tone of the Speech, that the "favourite," as Bute was universally termed, was still behind the scenes, guiding and destined to guide the administration, and they stigmatised as a wilful misstatement of facts, a passage regarding the King of Prussia. The impression left by this conversation suggested to Wilkes the topics of the famous Number 45, which, sketching on his return home, he brought forth on the following Saturday, the 23rd April, 1768.

The language of this number of the periodical was strong, but not stronger than the public had been accustomed to expect from former issues. The squibs of modern journalistic comedy go much further. No one would nowadays take serious offence at such a mock epitaph as this:—"Died, Mr. John Bull, a very worthy, plain, honest, old gentleman of Saxon descent. He was choked by inadvertently swallowing a thistle, which he had placed by way of garnish on the top of his salad."

The Speech from the Throne, the *North Briton* pronounced "the most abandoned instance of Ministerial effrontery ever attempted to be imposed on mankind." The passage in the Speech, in which the King of Prussia is exhibited as accepting the terms offered by the other powers, was described as "an infamous fallacy apparent to all mankind; for it is known that the King of Prussia did not barely approve, but absolutely dictate as a conqueror, every article of the terms of peace."

Wilkes' estimate of the temper of the occupant of the Throne, and the peril to popular liberty which lay in his aspirations to extend the royal prerogative, is apparent in the spirited definition he gives of the kingly office in the English constitution. "A despotic Minister will always endeavour to dazzle his Prince with high-flown ideas of the prerogative and honour of the Crown, which the Minister will make a parade of firmly maintaining. . . . The Stuart line has ever been intoxicated with the slavish doctrines of absolute unlimited power of the Crown. Some

of that line were so weakly advised as to reduce them to practice, but the English nation was too spirited to suffer the least encroachment on the ancient liberties of the kingdom. The King of England is only the first magistrate of this country, but is invested by the law with the whole executive power. . . . The prerogative of the Crown is to exert the constitutional powers entrusted to it in a way, not of blind favour or partiality but of wisdom and judgment." Wilkes closes: "The people too have their prerogative, and I hope the fine words of Dryden will be engraven on our hearts, 'Freedom is the English subject's prerogative.'"

Bute's Ministry had been overthrown by Wilkes. The new Government, apprehending perhaps a similar disaster, or at all events entertaining little hope of being able to pursue their designs in peace so long as he was free, resolved on a new policy of dealing with him. He must be removed. Could the power of the law be invoked, and its machinery set in motion to effect this? And if so, how? were the questions they proposed to set before the Attorney-General, Mr. Charles York, and the Solicitor-General, Sir Fletcher Norton, on the Monday after the appearance of No. 45, of the *North Briton*. Such, however, was the haste of the Crown to proceed, that the ministers did not wait for the answer of their law advisers, but went to work for themselves on the very next day. Taking the law into their own hands, they issued the famous General Warrant, which made such a noise in the history of the time. This warrant authorised one Nicholas Carrington and three others, "taking a constable to their assistance, to make strict and diligent search for the authors, printers, and publishers of a seditious and treasonable paper entitled the *North Briton*, No. 45, printed by G. Kearsley, Ludgate Street, London, and having found them, to apprehend and seize them, together with their papers, and bring them in safe custody before me—Dunk Halifax, All Mayors' sheriff." Such a warrant was nothing less than the odious *lettre de cachet* of the tyrannical government of France transplanted to British soil. Four obscure bailiffs were by it armed with the power of arbitrary law, to search houses, seize papers, and arrest the persons of any number of citizens they liked. In virtue of this warrant they did seize a

number of persons who had nothing whatever to do with the paper in question.

The answer of the law officers came on Wednesday, that No. 45 being "a most infamous and seditious libel, the Government could proceed against it either by indictment or information," and recommended the latter process as more usual for the Crown. But the Government had already adopted a more expeditious process, and their general warrant was already out. Batch after batch of printers, masters and journeymen, were brought up for examination before the Secretaries of State, without adding anything material to the statement of Kearsley, the publisher of the paper, that Wilkes had given the order for publication, and that Churchill had received the profits of the sale. Of the writers he knew nothing whatever, till the arrest of Balfe, the forty-ninth person taken up under the general warrant, put them in possession of the very manuscript from which the obnoxious article had been printed. It was in the handwriting of Wilkes, and several letters signed with his name were found with it, in the printing office. Again consulted, the reply of the law officers went the length of making libel a breach of the peace. This offence had the legal force of nullifying Parliamentary privilege; and, charged with it, Wilkes became amenable to arrest.

The Government, strong in the blunt determination of their measures, had not awaited the more cautious missive of their legal advisers; and by six o'clock in the morning of the day on which it was communicated, the King's messengers had already beset the house of Wilkes in Great George Street, Westminster, where he was arrested. Wilkes demanded the warrant, and not finding his name in it, denied its legality, and then maintained an attitude of resistance, till at length, well assured that the use of force was contemplated, he yielded, and was carried an hour after to the house of Lord Halifax in the same street. Here, both Halifax and Lord Egremont, the Secretaries of State, sat in judgment upon him as Inquisitors. Wilkes refused to criminate himself by replying to their questions, and told them that their quires of paper would be as milk-white at the end of his examination, as they were at the commencement. Lord Halifax pressed him to a "generous frank confession," an expression in which

Wilkes saw, as he observed in reply, "a prostitution of the word generous, to an act of the utmost treachery and wickedness." The result was that he was committed forthwith to the Tower. Even there his effrontery never deserted him, for he coolly requested after the remand that he might be put in a cell which had not been previously tenanted by a Scotchman. While in prison, he was treated as a condemned and dangerous criminal, whom no one should be permitted to see. Access was even denied to Serjeant Glynn, his counsel; and, stranger still, the Court of Common Pleas, in its efforts to bring him up for investigation, was successfully baffled by the manœuvres of the Crown. The great palladium of the subject for this purpose, the Habeas Corpus, was promptly directed by that Court to those who held Wilkes in charge; but it proved of no avail, as, by the time of its service, they had been relieved of their trust and others substituted in their place. So anxious were the Government to parry the force of the legal instrument of which they feared a re-issue, that they changed Wilkes' custodians four times in the short remainder of the day of his arrest. Three days of close detention followed, before the Habeas Corpus succeeded in bringing Wilkes into the Court of Common Pleas. The Court took three days more to deliberate on its judgment, and while this was pending, his friends were allowed to visit him. This indulgence crowded his prison-cell with the *élite* of the citizens and the Opposition. Among his visitors were the Duke of Grafton and Lord Temple. The latter nobleman found, on his returning from the Tower, a royal mandate, ordering him, as commander of the Bucks Militia, to dismiss John Wilkes from the commission he held in it. It was some comfort to Temple, however, while obeying the injunction, to lighten the humiliation by expressing his own concern at the loss of an officer so endeared to the whole corps. This form of revenge George III. indulged in, in several instances: for censuring the terms of the peace, the Duke of Newcastle, the Earl of Grafton, and the Marquis of Rockingham were dismissed from the Lord-lieutenancies of their respective counties.

Brought into Court again on the 6th, Wilkes remarked in his address that the liberties of all peers and commoners awaited decision that day in his case, which involved a question of such

importance as to determine at once whether English liberty be a reality or a show. Chief-Justice Pratt decided that the tendency in a libel to a breach of the peace, not being an actual breach thereof, the Parliamentary privilege of freedom from arrest remained unimpaired to Mr. Wilkes. The arbitrary proceedings of the Government had spread a fever of excitement in the city, and this decision was hailed with enthusiasm by the densely thronged Court, such as had not shaken the walls of Old Westminster since the acquittal of the seven bishops. Wilkes was escorted in triumph to his house by the crowd, and in the evening the city was illuminated in honour of his release. On his return home, he addressed a short note to the Secretaries of State, complaining of the abstraction of his papers. "I find," he said, "that my house has been robbed, and am informed that the stolen goods are in the possession of one or both of your lordships." In the reply of the lords, these words were censured as "scurrilous and indecent;" terms which Wilkes, in his rejoinder expressed surprise at being used by their lordships, when and applied to a legal demand of an Englishman for his own property.

Earl Temple was dismissed from the Lord-lieutenancy of the county of Bucks; an office hitherto considered beyond the reach of party; solely on account of the support he gave Wilkes. This stigma on his name occurred on the day after Wilkes was released from the Tower, and the profligate Sandwich was elected as Temple's successor. The Government did not stop here; they even struck the noble lord's name off the roll of the Privy Council. This act of spite, so far from daunting the nobleman, served only to stimulate him to further efforts, and thenceforth he threw himself heart and soul into the popular cause. This victory, though important, was limited in its effects. It was simply one in favour of the privileges of a certain class—the members of the House of Commons—but the Government had trenched on the broad rights of the people themselves, in the claims they set up under a General Warrant of the right to seizure and imprisonment of his Majesty's subjects, without previous appeal to any constituted legal authority. A greater battle remained to be fought in favour of the general rights of the masses.

CHAPTER III.

WILKES AND LIBERTY.

Terror of the Chief Secretaries—The Incorruptible Judge—Lord Chesterfield's Remarks—Wilkes Cited before Mansfield—Visit to Paris—Proceedings in Parliament—No. "45" Ordered to be Burnt—Duel with Martin—The "Essay on Woman"—Treachery of the Government—Bishop Warburton—The King's Notion of Government—Wilkes and the People—Popular Excitement—The Court of Common Pleas—Printers Pilloried—Sir Fletcher Norton's Reply—The Rockingham Ministry—Wilkes and Horne Standing for Middlesex—Horne's Support—Success—Judgment of the Court of King's Bench—In Prison—Rescued by the Mob—Riot—Surrenders Himself—Death of Allen—Lord Weymouth's Letter—Expelled the House—Repeated Elections—Dr. Franklin on the Situation—A Lady's Opinion—Luttrell—Middlesex Petition—Discussion in the House—Nobility of Chatham—Anecdote—Wilkes, Lord Mayor—Takes His Seat—Rescinded Resolutions—Becomes Chamberlain—Career in Parliament—His Character—Social Condition of the Period—Death of Wilkes.

TO Lord Temple is due, if not the initiative, at least, the maintenance of the struggle. He generously supplied funds to meet the heavy legal expenses that must be encountered in carrying the case through the high courts of law. Under his directions, separate actions were instituted against the King's messengers by each of the printers, and a series of indictments were brought by Wilkes against the State Secretaries, Egremont and Halifax, the Under-secretary Wood, the Treasury Solicitor Webb, and the King's messengers.

So formidable an array of charges frightened even the Chief Secretaries themselves. Lord Halifax, in particular, was so apprehensive of the responsibility he was undertaking on behalf of the Government, that before entering on the defence, he secured a special warrant under the privy seal, thus fortifying himself against prospective loss.

On the 6th of July, 1762, the first of the trials came off, in the

Court of Common Pleas, before Chief-Justice Pratt. Mr. Huckle, the printer, obtained damages to the amount of £300, Lindsey £200, and about sixteen others, down to the very errand-boy, were compensated. These verdicts decided other cases pending against the King's messengers. The defence cost the country over £100,000. Chief-Justice Pratt's conduct won him golden opinions; he was known as the "incorruptible judge;" the Corporation of London voted him the freedom of the City in a golden box, and requested him to sit for his portrait to be placed in the Guildhall. Lord Chesterfield said of him:—"There is hardly an instance of any person prosecuted by the Crown whom the judges have not very partially tried, and if they could bring it about with the jury, condemned, right or wrong. We have had ship-money judges, dispensing judges, but I never read of any patriot judges, except in the Old Testament, and those perhaps were only so because, at that time, there was no king in Israel."

Having signally failed in the Common Pleas, the Government resolved to try the case in the Court of King's Bench, where Lord Chief-Justice Mansfield presided. Wilkes was ordered before this Court. The summons he disregarded, having learned from his lawyer that the course taken was illegal. Meanwhile Wilkes paid a visit to his daughter, in Paris, to whom he was devoted. Here he was prevented by the French police from fighting a duel with a Captain Forbes, a Scotchman, who pursued him thither, and took an opportunity of accosting him in the street while he was walking with a friend. The pretext of the duel on the part of Forbes was the illtreatment which his country had received in the *North Briton*. In this there was ground for suspicion that the fire-eater was instigated to the action on behalf of the Government; for Forbes, on his return, through the instrumentality of Sandwich, was promoted to the rank of general in the Portuguese army, and thus removed out of the way.

Parliament met on the 15th of November and had quite enough wherewith to occupy itself in the complications arising out of the affair of the *North Briton*. In the Commons, Wilkes stood up at once, after the King's Speech had been read, to complain of the violation of his privilege, but he was not allowed to proceed.

The Parliamentary campaign against him had been carefully planned. A complaint on the point of privilege had precedence over every other matter introduced to the notice of the House, except a royal message. With this, then, the Government came armed, resolved to anticipate Wilkes by having the first word on the affair. The royal missive called attention to No. 45 of the *North Briton* as a seditious and dangerous libel, and dwelt on the contumacy of Wilkes towards the King's Bench. Upon the consideration of these matters the House entered at once. Lord North had undertaken, during the recess, to introduce the motion against Wilkes, and had since sought to evade this unpleasant duty, but being pressed by the Government he now moved that No. 45 of the *North Briton* was a false, scandalous, and seditious libel, and the House, adopting the motion by 278 against 111, ordered the obnoxious paper to be burnt by the common hangman. Wilkes's complaint was heard at the conclusion of the debate, and further consideration of the whole matter was postponed to the 23rd November. Mr. S. Martin, member for Camelford and Secretary to the Treasury, took occasion, in the course of the debate, to refer to the description given of himself in No. 40 of the *North Briton* as "the most treacherous, base, selfish, mean, abject, low-lived, and dirty fellow that had ever wriggled himself into a secretaryship." Mr. Martin called the writer of this paper, "a coward and malignant scoundrel," and repeated the words, that there might be no mistake as to their being heard. He could have preferred his complaint any day in the former Parliament up to April the 19th, but he deferred it, that he might previously have deliberate pistol practice at a target. Next day Wilkes wrote to him as follows: "To cut off all pretence of ignorance as to the author. I whisper in your ear, that every passage in the *North Briton*, in which you have been named or even alluded to, was written by your humble servant, JOHN WILKES." On the same day, Martin left a note at Wilkes's house, appointing an hour to meet him in Hyde Park. The choice of weapons was with Wilkes, but Martin selected pistols, thinking that his choice would not be questioned by so ready a combatant as Wilkes. Nor was he mistaken in his calculation. Wilkes was on the ground before him; each fired two shots; in

the second round, Wilkes fell, with a ball in the groin. While bleeding profusely, and near the point of death, with thoughtful generosity he urged his opponent to flight, lest, in the event of his demise, Martin might be tried for murder, from which catastrophe even his friends in the Treasury would be unable to protect him.

Meanwhile, the Government had in hand a more powerful means of crushing Wilkes, and this they used with unsparing effect in the Lords. Accused of a breach of privilege in the House of Commons, they now turned the accusation against Wilkes, and charged him with a similar offence in the Lords, for having published a licentious poem, entitled an "Essay on Woman," with notes, in the name of one of the spiritual peers, Warburton, the celebrated Bishop of Gloucester. The Government got an inkling of the authorship from the letters of Wilkes, which were found at the office of Kearsley the printer, when he was apprehended.

Despite the protests of Lord Temple, who foresaw danger in the undertaking, Wilkes had set up a printing press in his own house for the re-issue of the *North Briton* in a collected form, in order to make money by it. The "Essay on Woman," to which was appended a profane paraphrase on the "Veni Creator," was another issue from this private press, of which he had but twelve copies struck off, and these by Michael Curry, the most trusted of his printers. This man he placed under the strictest injunctions of secrecy. Curry, thinking probably that the possession of a copy might be of future use, printed a thirteenth for himself. The way in which this copy of his came into the hands of the Government is curious. One Jennings, a printer in Wilkes's private establishment, supping with a brother printer, brought to the feast some butter in a paper. Farmer, the host, was curious enough to read the printed sheet, which happened to be a page torn from the "Essay on Woman." The obscenity of the poem made the torn sheet a curiosity in his eyes; it was passed from hand to hand till it reached the Rev. J. Kidgill, chaplain to the Earl of March, and from thence found its way into the hands of the Government, for the earl was a great friend to that administration. Kidgill was employed by the Government to procure a complete copy. Opportunely, at this time Wilkes had a quarrel with his printer who, tempted by

revenge and by the bribes offered him, was induced to give up his copy and appear in evidence against his master. For this service the miserable printer only received the magnificent reward of hearing from Lord Sandwich "that he had saved the Government." The poem, a parody of Pope's "Essay on Man," and its accompaniments, was written with brutal indelicacy, and deserved the severest castigation. The Government, however, were more in fault, for they, not Wilkes, became its publishers. They cared very little for public morality if they could only gain their end in crushing a political opponent, and now resolved to play the part of censor. Their hypocrisy found its foils in the Earl of Sandwich and Bishop Warburton. The orthodoxy of the prelate on the fundamental Christian doctrines had been for a long time a matter of discussion. He had published a book called the "Divine Legation," in which he stated all the objections to the books of Moses, without inserting any of the answers. His appointment to the episcopal bench caused grievous offence to the clergy. Nor had Warburton done much to assure them, when he replied to those who told him how unpopular his nomination was; "Tell them it was well for their cause that I did not embrace any other profession." Walpole called him "that scurrilous mortal," while Bolingbroke once declared that discussion with the bishop "would be as degrading as to wrestle with a chimney-sweep." The other gentleman who bore witness against Wilkes was that paragon of depravity, the Earl of Sandwich, recently expelled from the Beefsteak Club for his profanity. His treachery and audacity in this case had the effect of increasing, in so far as was possible, the contempt in which he was held by all honest men, and of rendering his name a byword for all that is basest and most vicious in human conduct. Sandwich now astounded his old comrades in wickedness, yet none of his misdeeds alienated the affection of George III., who, for many years regarded him as one of his favourite Ministers, though in the nobleman's conversation he had to endure not a little of the Medmenham seasoning, mingled with the flowers of Billingsgate. The monarch, no doubt, was consoled by the aphorism which he repeated to his Ministers:— 'In order to govern bad men you must employ bad men.'

Sandwich was well known as a member of the select crew of licentious revellers who gathered round Wilkes, and a few days before denouncing his depravity, had been seen drinking with him in a tavern and exchanging obscene jests. This champion of morality was delighted at inflicting the ribaldry of the essay on the House, and read it to the assembled Lords with unmistakable satisfaction. Lord Hardwicke begged him to desist, upon the ground that it was not necessary to read the whole, but Sandwich himself enjoyed it too heartily to stop before he had reached the end. At the time every one was in an agony of curiosity to see this "Essay on Woman." Lord Chesterfield, commenting on the occasion, said, "It is a great mercy that Mr. Wilkes is the intrepid defender of our rights and liberties, and no less a mercy," he was constrained to add, "that God should have raised up the Earl of Sandwich to vindicate our religion and morality." The Bishop of Gloucester excelled the noble lord in a tide of denunciation, which would have excited the envy of St. Jerome. Here are a few of the gems which have been preserved. "The very blackest fiends of hell," he said, "would not keep company with Wilkes. The poem was worthy of the Devil." "No," continued the outraged divine, correcting himself, bravely tempering justice with mercy, even towards the arch enemy of souls; "I beg the Devil's pardon; even he is incapable of writing it." Eventually the poem was declared a breach of privilege, and Wilkes, as its author, was ordered to be prosecuted in the King's Bench. A few days after, the Lords concurred with the Commons in condemning No. 45 of the *North Briton* to the fire, by the hands of the common hangman. So secretly had the Government concerted measures, that the exposure in the Upper House of the "Essay on Woman" had taken Wilkes by surprise. Suffering now from his wound, he felt acutely this stab made on his reputation. He was, however, consoled by the proceedings of December 8th, which proved that he was still the popular idol. On that day, the sheriffs proceeded from Guildhall to carry out the order of Parliament to commit the *North Briton* to the flames. Enthusiastic crowds filled the streets, shouting, "Wilkes and Liberty!" among whom were noticeable many of the better class of citizens. The sheriffs, carriage was broken, and he was forced to alight and walk on

foot to the place of sacrifice, amid the jeers and hootings of the mob. At the Exchange, a new disappointment awaited him. The wood was damp, and, to the infinite delight of the crowd, refused to perform its invidious service. The sheriff and the hangman were thus driven to hold the victimised paper over the flames of a torch. But before this could be accomplished, the *North Briton* was rescued by the people, with shouts of joy, while a jack-boot and petticoat were committed to the flames in its place. The sheriff had acted a daring part throughout, for he had no support from the city magistrates or civic officers. The city marshal had refused to serve unless supported by the military, and the city constables had fled at the first onset of the crowd. On returning, the sheriff was very nearly suffering for his rashness, for after entering his carriage, the windows were smashed, and he was plentifully bespattered with mud.

The 6th of the same month brought Wilkes a new victory in the shape of damages amounting to £1,000 in the Common Pleas, against Under-secretary Wood, and, what was yet more important, a pronouncement from the presiding judge, Chief-Justice Pratt, against the legality of general warrants. Sir Charles Pratt pronounced Wilkes entitled to his discharge, because of his privilege as a member of Parliament, since that privilege holds good in all cases except treason, felony, or breach of the peace. "We are all of opinion," he said, "that a libel is not a breach of the peace; it tends to a breach of the peace and that is the utmost. But that which only tends to a breach of the peace cannot be an actual breach of it. In the case of the seven bishops, Judge Powel, the only honest man of the four judges, dissented, and I am bound to be of his opinion, and to say that case is not law;—but it shows the miserable condition to which the law was reduced. Let Mr. Wilkes be discharged from his imprisonment."

On the evening of this trial, another attempt was made to assassinate Wilkes, but without effect. When brought before the Court, the discovery of a clasp-knife on the would-be assassin, was not considered evidence of an evil intent, so he was acquitted.

Wilkes's physicians, Doctors Greaves and Brocklesby, attended the House on the 16th of December, to certify to his inability to

be present on that day in compliance with the injunction. The House made order that he should attend on the 29th. Anxious for independent medical testimony, they appointed Dr. Habberdeen and Mr. Hawkins to report upon his case. Wilkes refused the services of these physicians, but sent instead for two of the surgeons in attendance upon his Majesty, Dr. Duncan and Mr. Middleton, who, calling upon him, were humorously told that his choice fell on them on account of their nationality, "for," added he, "if the House would have him watched, he thought two Scotchmen the most proper to be his spies."

Wilkes now began to feel the evils of his extravagant mode of living. To escape his creditors, he fled to Paris, as soon as his wound would permit him to travel. He suffered much during the journey, and was daunted by the feebleness of his condition from undertaking the return journey for the 19th of January, 1764. His inability to attend in the House on that day was testified by the certificate of two French surgeons. Their testimony, however, was discarded by the House, which, choosing to construe Wilkes's non-attendance into contempt, proceeded forthwith to expel him, as the contumacious author of a seditious libel.

But if the House was now rid of Wilkes, the great question he had raised as to the validity of General Warrants, remained for agitation. The longest debate on record up to that period (one of seventeen hours) occupied consideration, on the 14th and 15th of February, and being adjourned, the question was hotly contested again on the 17th. Shirking the main question, on which it apprehended defeat, the Government had set its heart on gaining an adjournment of four months. In this they succeeded, by the slender majority of 14 in a House of 400. So anxious were they to secure a triumph, that the sick and suffering of the ministerial camp were impressed in large numbers for the occasion. Crutches and sedan chairs gave a novel appearance to the House; and so many were brought down to it in blankets, that it reminded Walpole of the pool of Bethesda.

Success and defeat alternate in Wilkes's career in almost as rapid succession as cloud and sunshine in a landscape. A few days after this, on the 21st of February, he was brought in guilty in the King's Bench, under the presidency of Chief-Justice

Mansfield, of publishing the "Essay on Woman;" it was decided that the private printing of a few copies of a document for distribution among a close circle of friends was publication in the legal sense.

The affair of the *North Briton* still occupied the legal world throughout the year 1764. In July, Wilkes's printers, Kearsley and Williams, were found guilty of republishing the *North Briton*; and Wilkes, not being able to appear to receive the sentence of the King's Bench, was outlawed in the Sheriff's Court in November. The printers were called up for sentence on January 25th, 1765. Kearsley was rewarded for giving up Wilkes's name, by a discharge; Williams was fined; had to give seven years' security for £100, and, besides standing in the pillory, suffered a confinement of six months' duration.

The matter of General Warrants was before the House again on the 27th of January, and, after a protracted debate, further discussion was declared inopportune, pending the final decision of the law. It was during this debate that Sir Charles York urged the postponement of a decision. Pitt, as usual, adopted a lofty tone; "I am no judge," he said, "but sit here to judge judges; there has not been a violation of the Constitution but has been sanctioned by the greatest judges." Sir Fletcher Norton, the Solicitor-General, stung perhaps by this attack, declared on the other hand that he "should regard a resolution of the House of Commons no more than the oaths of so many drunken porters in Covent Garden." Well might Walpole, writing to the Earl of Hertford, say, "Had old Onslow been in the chair, I believe he would have knocked him down with the mace."

On the 14th of February, the authorities had Williams, the printer, conveyed to the pillory in a coach, upon which "No. 45" was conspicuously painted. The occasion caused a popular ovation, cheering crowds hailing the printer as he was borne along. A collection was made for him round the pillory, which amounted to £200. The mock execution of a jack-boot and Scotch bonnet again gratified the spite of the people against Bute, the reputed author of all their ills, and was a laughable compensation for the humiliation to which Williams was subjected.

In the summer of this year, the administration which had persecuted Wilkes, found itself no longer able to carry on the government, and was succeeded by the Rockingham Ministry. One of the first acts of this new Government was to raise Chief-Justice Pratt to the peerage, under the title of Baron Camden. On the 8th of November, the final effort to quash the decision of the Common Pleas in the case of Daniel Leech against the King's messengers, completely broke down in the Court of King's Bench. The judges were unanimous in confirming the decision of the Common Pleas; and thus the final registration was made into the law and political life of the nation, the right for which John Wilkes had so long and stoutly contended.

Wilkes in the interim had recovered from the effects of his wound, and proceeded to Italy. The general election in the beginning of 1768 summoned him home. To have the appearance of acting constitutionally, he sought in person a reversal of his outlawry from the King, but the action being informal received no attention. The election for the City of London on the 23rd of March resulted in bringing him in lowest on the poll of the seven candidates; he however scoring as many as 1,247 votes. He might now have returned disappointed to France, or have gone to gaol in the King's Bench prison, were it not that at this juncture he met John Horne. They were already acquainted, and had quarrelled, but Horne was not a man to sacrifice his admiration of public character to private feeling. He pledged Wilkes the entire support of his influence in procuring his return for Middlesex. Wilkes accepted the offer, and on the morning of his defeat in the city, his address to the Middlesex electors appeared.

In standing for Middlesex, Wilkes had the assistance of several of his old friends, among whom were Lord Temple and the Duke of Portland; the former provided him with the necessary form of freehold qualification, then required from every Knight of the Shire. But more potent than either was the Rev. John Horne, of New Brentford, where the election took place, and where his influence was paramount. Mr. Horne spared neither his purse nor his efforts: lauded Wilkes's merits at private meetings, wrote articles in the newspapers, and appeared at the hustings openly as his supporter. The freeholders of Middlesex,

under his guidance, met and agreed to return Wilkes at their own expense. The election took place on the 28th of March ; Mr. Wilkes was returned at the head of the poll, having scored 1,292 votes, while Mr. Cook obtained only 827. There was rejoicing among the people at this victory, and the mob, who five years ago illuminated their houses for "Wilkes and No. 45," now shouted vociferously, and compelled others to illuminate for "Wilkes and Liberty." So general became this cry among all classes that it is said the little Prince, subsequently Regent and King, ran into his father's presence and shouted, "Wilkes and Liberty."

The Ministry were thrown into the utmost consternation by this unexpected defeat, and would have granted Wilkes a pardon, as the best and most sensible way of quelling the excited feelings which were roused, had it not been for the blind obstinacy of the King. Meanwhile Wilkes had to appear before the Court of King's Bench, to receive sentence for the two offences of which a jury had found him guilty. Wilkes complained that no verdict could have been found against him on either of these charges, if it had not been for the alteration of the record of information against him. The first charge was the republication of the *North Briton*, No. 45, and the other the "Essay on Woman." He admitted the former, as being founded on facts, and as containing nothing disrespectful to the King or his ministers. Regarding the poem, he blushed at the recollection that it should in any way have been brought before the public eye. He had printed only a few copies, and none were intended for publication. Wilkes made a serious charge against Lord Mansfield of altering the records, which conduct rendered the verdicts absolutely void. When Wilkes concluded his speech, the Attorney-General moved for his committal on the outlawry matter. He was sentenced to be imprisoned for twenty-two months, to pay £1,000, and to find security for good behaviour for seven years after the term of the imprisonment had expired. Consigned to the custody of the marshal of the King's Bench prison and his assistants, they set out in a hackney-coach, Horne being allowed to accompany him. At Westminster Bridge a dense multitude surrounded the coach, detached the horses, turned the vehicle

round, forced out the marshal and his assistants, and drew Wilkes and Horne along the Strand with shouts of triumph. On their way, the mob often asked Wilkes where he wished to go; he replied, "To the King's Bench prison, where the laws of my country have sent me." As soon as he found a pretext for parting with his boisterous admirers, he did so, and went to the prison and surrendered himself. From thence he issued his address to the freeholders of Middlesex, in which he assured them of his steadfastness in the cause of liberty, and expressed the hope that he should one day concert with them and other patriots the means "of rooting out the remains of arbitrary power and Star Chamber inquisition."

On the 9th of June he was brought up for judgment. It was on this occasion, while declaring the reversal of the outlawry, that Lord Mansfield made one of his best speeches. When Wilkes was in prison, a number of idle people had daily gathered round the building, in expectation of seeing him at one of the windows. On the day on which the new Parliament met, there was a larger concourse than usual, a rumour having been spread that Wilkes would be allowed to take his seat. The Ministry, anticipating some disturbance, sent a guard of soldiers to the prison; and Lord Weymouth, Secretary of State, sent the chairman of the quarter sessions a letter, advising him to have no scruples as to employing the soldiers, if he felt it necessary for the preservation of the peace. Unfortunately, a company of the 3rd Foot, commonly called a Scotch regiment, was sent on duty. The crowd, after long waiting, became impatient, finding Wilkes was not to be released; the soldiers acted roughly, but not without provocation. Two of the magistrates stood forward, and ordered the Riot Act to be read; stones began to be thrown; the soldiers were ordered to fire, and obeyed. A young man named Allen, who took no part in the proceedings, was killed, and over twenty people wounded. Lord Barrington, Secretary of War, wrote, by the orders of the King, a letter, in which he signified his approbation of the conduct of both officers and men. An inquest, however, was held, which resulted in a verdict of wilful murder against the magistrate who ordered the firing, and the soldier who did the deed. The

magistrate was tried and acquitted; the soldier was dismissed the service, but received as compensation a shilling a day for life. Seven months after this unhappy occurrence in St George's Fields, Wilkes by some means got possession of Lord Weymouth's letter, recommending the magistrate to employ the soldiers in dispersing the people. He published it at length in the *St. James's Chronicle*, with this short preface:—"I send you the following authentic State paper, the date of which, prior by more than three weeks to the fatal 10th of May, shows how long the horrid massacre in St. George's Fields had been planned and determined upon before it was carried into execution; and how long a hellish project can be brooded over by some infernal spirits without one moment's remorse."

The Secretary of War complained of this publication, and readily procured an order for the summoning and examination of Wilkes. At the bar of the House, he avowed himself the writer of the sentence, and added, "Whenever a Secretary of State shall dare to write so bloody a scroll, I will through life dare to write such prefatory remarks, as well as make my appeal to the nation on the occasion."

After this avowal, Lord Barrington moved that the writer be expelled the House for having written the three libels, No. 45, *North Briton*; the "Essay on Woman;" and the preface to Lord Weymouth's letter. A long debate followed; but Wilkes was expelled on the 3rd of February, 1769, yet not without remonstrance. A fortnight after, he was re-elected without opposition, and the next day there was a great debate in the House. The Ministry held that the expulsion of Wilkes incapacitated him for re-election. In this unlawful proceeding they were supported by Charles James Fox, who, having imbibed the opinions of his family, now, at the outset of his career made himself the mouthpiece of their prejudices. A little before this, the celebrated Blackstone was elevated to the Bench; he, too, warmly maintained the incapacity of Wilkes, but was answered by Mr. Grenville from a passage in his own book, where all the rightful grounds of disqualification were enumerated and no such case as that of Wilkes was among them. On Blackstone's elevation to the Bench, he published a second edition of his great work, toning down his former definitions to suit

the exigences of his new position ; hence the favourite toast at the Opposition banquets became : "The first edition of Blackstone's Commentaries on the Laws of England." The great legal authority was sharply rebuked for this act of perfidy. Perhaps the comment of Junius was the most cutting : "For the defence of truth, of law, and reason, the doctor's book may be safely consulted ; but whoever wishes to cheat his neighbour of his estate, or rob a country of its rights, need make no scruple as to consulting the doctor himself."

At the close of the session of 1769, the Court party prevailed, and Wilkes was excluded from the House of Commons. This insignificant victory was purchased at a heavy cost ; for he had now become the idol of the nation, the champion of the Constitution, and from within his prison, exercised a more powerful influence than any member of the Legislature.

After this expulsion he was repeatedly returned by the Middlesex freeholders. It was during the crisis of the Middlesex election that Franklin wrote to his son : "I went last week to Winchester, and observed that for fifteen miles out of town there was scarce a door or window-shutter next the road unmarked with "Wilkes and Liberty," and "No. 45 ;" and this continued here and there quite to Winchester, which is sixty-four miles." The picture of the patriot was multiplied to such an extent, that his portrait squinted at the traveller even from the signboards of half the inns in the kingdom. He used to relate to his companions, with incomparable humour, how an old lady, behind whom he happened to be walking, exclaimed with much bitterness, as she looked up at one of the public-house profiles, "Ah, Jack Wilkes, you swing everywhere but where you ought."

The Government next set up an official candidate, Colonel Luttrell, in opposition to the declared favourite. Walpole said the man for this purpose should be, "A man of the firmest virtue, or a ruffian of dauntless prostitution." Luttrell was a Medmenham monk, and belonged to the latter class. He was a man who had graduated in every kind of infamy, and crowned his rascality by challenging his father to fight a duel. The election resulted in another ministerial disappointment. Wilkes obtained 1,143 votes, Luttrell only 296. This election gave rise to a far more import-

ant struggle than the contest over the General Warrants; for this was not a question of individual wrong, but of the danger to the constitutional right of a large body of electors. Who was to conquer; the electors of Middlesex, or the subservient majority in the House of Commons, who had sold themselves, in order to be instrumental in gratifying the personal resentment of the King? The House declared that Luttrell ought to have been elected, and ordered the return to be amended, by inserting his name instead of that of Wilkes. The Middlesex freeholders petitioned against Luttrell, and their petition was presented by one of the most fearless and honest of the reforming party—Sir George Savile. The House took the petition into consideration, but finally declared that Luttrell had been duly elected. In this determination to seat Luttrell and depose Wilkes, the House of Commons brought the Court, the Government, and itself into disrepute, by the unconstitutional manner in which it persecuted the man whom the people had selected, and thus ignored the right of a great constituency. There was ample precedent for the exclusion of any member subject by law to disability, and for seating in his place a candidate who had obtained a much smaller number of votes. During the eighteen years of confusion, from 1642 to 1660, forty-nine members were expelled in two months of one year. But here lies the distinction,—and it is a vital one,—that Wilkes was not subject to disability by any law, but only by a resolution of the House; therefore, to exclude him as ineligible, and to seat another candidate in his place, was to make a resolution of one branch of the Legislature equal to the law by all three, and that on the tenderest of all points—the freedom of election. If such a course were followed, there would be no reason why the country should choose members for the House of Commons, as the House of Commons would, in fact, be choosing its own members. On the ground of constitutional right the arguments of the ministers were weak. Mr. Henry Cavendish was warmly applauded when he said, “I do from my soul detest and abhor as unconstitutional and illegal that damnable doctrine and position that a resolution of the House of Commons can make, alter, abrogate, suspend, or annihilate the law of the land.” None now would controvert that statement, though many Tories had then

and would now set up privilege above statute. The cry of "Wilkes and Liberty" became the watchword of a great party, and not the hasty utterance of the ignorant rabble.

Lord Chatham, in the House of Lords, denounced the proceedings with great vehemence. He was one of the few statesmen of his day who deserve special attention, both from the liberality of his mind and the nobility of his character. "There was a grandeur in Pitt's personal appearance," says a writer who knew him, "which produced awe and attention; and though broken with infirmity and age, his mind shone through the ruins of his body, armed his eye with lightning and lip with thunder." His speeches and far-seeing policy astonished and dazzled the country; his eloquence flashed, fulminated, and struck dismay among all but the most hardened of his antagonists. Only a few pregnant aphorisms have been handed down; they lie before us like the noble fragments of a Greek marble, a thing to meditate on and afford us glimpses of the past as through a darkened window. His power of invective was cold and cutting as the air that blows from an iceberg. His private life was spotless and untainted by the leprosy of corruption then raging. He was a man whose whole nature was animated with a love of country, pure, clear, and penetrating as the sound of a trumpet in a desert camp. Born at another period, and with a fit audience, all he wanted was a republican education to place him on a level with the greatest men of antiquity. England to a man accorded him a tropical welcome when king-craft tried to undermine and shatter his reputation.

At the opening of the session of 1770, Chatham moved an amendment to the Address, to the effect that in order to appease popular discontent, the case of the expulsion of John Wilkes should be taken into consideration. Lord Mansfield opposed the motion, making some personal reflections upon Wilkes, to which Lord Chatham made reply: "The character and circumstances of Mr. Wilkes have been improperly introduced into this debate, not only here, but in the Court of Judicature where his cause was tried—I mean the House of Commons. With one party he was a patriot of the first magnitude; with the other, the vilest incendiary. For my part, I consider him merely and indifferently as an English

subject, possessed of certain rights which the laws have given him, and which the laws alone can take from him. I am neither moved by his private vices nor by his public merits. In his person though he were the worst of men, I contend for the safety and security of the best; and God forbid, my lords, that there should be a power in this country of measuring the civil rights of the subject by his moral character or by any other rule but the fixed laws of the land."

Despite the force of this splendid appeal, Chatham failed to attain his object. Only 36 peers voted for the amendment, and 208 against it. Lord Chatham was charged with being pompous and theatrical in manner; but this affectation seemed a part of himself. He had a wonderful voice, which when it sank into a whisper, could be heard to the remotest benches, and when he strained it to its full extent, the sound rose like the swell of an organ. A few months after his amendment was rejected, he reiterated the same sentiments. "Here in my place, in this illustrious assembly, I do avow that Colonel Luttrell is no representative of the people. He is a mere nominee, thrust in by the enemies of the land and to the principles—the established principles—of the Constitution. Again," he said, "we cannot therefore enter into any debate in which the Middlesex business will not be proper; in which it will not be absolutely necessary. I shall, for my part, consider it the alarumbell of liberty. I shall ring it incessantly in the ears of the whole kingdom, till I rouse the people to a proper sense of their injuries, and convince ministers, entrenched as they are in their venal majorities, that the privileges of Englishmen are never to be infringed." The stately gravity of Chatham was never abandoned even in circumstances where any exhibition of this trait was uncalled for. Once, while suffering from a protracted attack of his old enemy the gout, he used to receive his colleagues frequently in his bedroom. One evening in the depth of winter, the Duke of Newcastle had a consultation with him. The great statesman, owing to his malady, had such a horror of heat that he would never suffer a fire to be lighted in his room; the duke had an equal antipathy to cold, and the night being excessively severe, perceiving a second bed in the room, the duke seated himself

upon it, and covered his legs with the blanket. But still feeling cold, he gradually crept, full dressed as he was, into the bed ; and the two ministers lay for a considerable time, the one warmly declaiming in his most authoritative tone, and the other listening submissively, with nothing but their heads visible above the bed-clothes. In the case of Luttrell and the Middlesex election, the House of Commons made a fatal mistake, which has been pointed out by no other than Wilkes himself. " If once," he said, " the ministers shall be permitted to say whom the freeholders shall not choose, the next step will be to tell them whom they shall choose."

No public measure since the accession of George III. had excited so general an alarm or caused so universal a discontent ; and no political event had been so ably discussed out of doors or produced so much masterly writing. It was said by those who opposed these measures, that the right of the electors to be represented by men of their own choice was so essential for the preservation of all their rights, that it ought to be considered as one of the most sacred parts of the Constitution ; that the House of Commons was not a self-constituted body, acting by any inherent right, but an elected body, restrained within the limits of a delegated authority, hence they could not dispute the right of their constituents without sapping the foundation of their own existence ; that the law of the land regulated the qualification of members to serve in Parliament, and that the freeholders of every county had a just right to return whom they thought proper, provided the candidate was not disqualified by those laws.

On the 17th of April, 1770, Wilkes's term of imprisonment had expired. In the following year occurred his last contest with the House of Commons. He was now alderman and sheriff of the City of London. In 1774 he was elected despite all the efforts of the Government, to be chief magistrate of the City. " It is wonderful to think," said Dr. Johnson, " that all the force of the Government was required to endeavour to prevent Wilkes from being chosen the chief magistrate of London, though the Liverymen knew he would rob their shops if he durst, and debauch their daughters if he could."

On the 10th of October, 1774, Wilkes was again elected for Middlesex, and this time was allowed to occupy his seat. In that Parliament, and in its successor of 1780, he made many attempts to procure the expunging of the resolutions against his election for Middlesex from the journals of the House, but without success, until the 3rd of May, 1782, when it voted that the resolution of 17th February, 1769, and all other resolutions concerning the Middlesex elections, should be expunged from their journals,—“being subversive of the rights of the whole body of electors of the kingdom.” Having so far succeeded, Wilkes did not offer himself for re-election in the next Parliament. He was chosen chamberlain in November 1780, and held this easy and lucrative post to the time of his death, in 1797. The only work required for its discharge was the composition of short speeches, addressed to those who were honoured with the freedom of the City. The latter portion of Wilkes' political career exhibited no marked characteristic, though his life was not entirely barren of results. He consistently opposed the American war, and advocated toleration of Dissenters and Roman Catholics, at a time when both parties were treated with much harshness. He urged on the House of Commons the duty of making the British Museum a useful institution, and giving to art and science adequate encouragement, at a time when few thought that Parliament should legislate in the interest of either. He advocated reform, and approved of the suppression of nomination boroughs. George III. wanted to introduce a form of personal government, which would have made him independent of Parliament; and although many of the corrupt statesmen of his time were ready to sustain him in this unconstitutional scheme, Wilkes effectually defeated it. Perhaps he did more than any man of his time to protect the subject from arbitrary proceedings on the part of the sovereign; and had it not been for Wilkes, Horne, and a few other ardent spirits of the day, the work of the Revolution would have been reversed. If Wilkes did not possess the purity of Marvell or the sincerity of Hampden, he did, nevertheless, good service to his country. If he happened to be always in debt, so were Chatham, Pitt, Burke, and Fox. If the charge of licentiousness were preferred against him, the same censure would

equally apply to almost all his contemporaries. In fact, the social condition of England during the reign of the Georges was in a very depraved state.

The nation, with the exception of a few families of the educated classes, was sunk into a degree of brutality almost inconceivable. Vice appeared in all its naked deformity. The habits of the first two kings of the House of Brunswick were coarse, profligate, and repulsive; the Court was beset by rapacious Germans, and women hired to be licentious. George II. placed under the same roof with his wife a swarm of concubines; the Queen encouraged his guilty passions, and preserved her power over him only by becoming herself the mistress of his mistresses. The King unblushingly consulted her about his amours, and the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Walpole, went so far as to jest with the Queen on the subject. The example set by royalty was not lost on the nobles, and the worst faults of the aristocracy were imitated by the wealthier classes of the community. The immorality of men and women of high rank was so gross, that the report of it will hardly be conceivable by the present generation, which, if not exceptional in purity, is at least more influenced by the grace of decorum. At that time a duchess, with several ladies of rank, in man's attire, attended a masquerade, which was thronged by women, notorious for vice of the lowest forms. Matrimony was ridiculed by both sexes, and the appellation of "rake" was as much in vogue among women as men, and regarded not with disapprobation, but with good-humoured tolerance. The fact is palpably admitted in the writings of the professional beauty of the day, the celebrated Lady Mary Wortley Montagu; while the works of Fielding, Chesterfield, Churchill, Richardson, and Berkeley teem with observations indicating the general depravity of the times. Henry Fox, Lord Chesterfield, Earl Sandwich, Lord Chancellor Northington, and Lord Thurlow, were all men of loose character.

Wilkes was the product of his age, and perhaps as good a type as could be selected of the society in which he moved. His shortcomings were known to his contemporaries, without lessening his popularity among the great bulk of the people, who regarded omissions of this kind with great leniency. The

services which Wilkes rendered his country must not be disparaged by any comparison with his private character, which was mean and contemptible. This side of his life will be better understood from passages in his correspondence with Horne. He had plenty of animal courage, as was shown in his duels; his wit and repartee can be inferred from his replies; but the man himself was entirely subordinate to his cause, and the good he did his country was done from no high aspiration, no love of mankind. When Junius, with fulsome flattery, requested that Wilkes should not make himself cheap by appearing so often in the streets, the only acknowledgment he made was, "that if he took the advice and kept indoors, it would be from no loftier motive than fear of the greatest villains out of hell, the bailiffs." It is certain he never would have filled a niche in the history of his day, if the King and his ministers had acted a constitutional part. He professed himself no Wilkite, and frequently ridiculed the cause he publicly vaunted. He affected a patriotism he was far from feeling; indeed, he rather made a boast of his insincerity. Standing on the hustings at Brentford, his opponent said to him, "I will take the sense of the meeting." "I will take the nonsense," replied Wilkes, "and we shall see who has the best of it." He was no true servant of the people; he scandalized liberty by his licentiousness, and patriotism by intrigues for place. In a letter to Mr. Coates in 1764, Wilkes says, "If Government means peace or friendship with me, I then no longer breathe hostility; and between ourselves, if they send me to Constantinople as ambassador, that is all I should wish." Compare the tone of this private and confidential letter with his speech before Chief Justice Pratt, when he stated in open court that the Ministry adopted a mode of prosecution towards him because they failed in their early attempts to corrupt him. This effrontery of assertion can best be appreciated by remembering that he was a disappointed suitor for place, and from such disappointments had all the libels sprung. When Wilkes had spent his money in Paris and exhausted his credit in London, he returned to England under sentence of outlawry, and threatened to attack the Government unless they agreed to his terms, saying, "If the ministers do not find employment for me, I am disposed to-

find employment for them." He was then supported by the Whigs much in the same spirit as the Tories had supported Sacheverell.

Wilkes saw in the public discontent a chance of renewing his traffic in popularity, and was astute enough to make the most of his chances. He always kept in view what he avowed to Gibbon—the making of his fortune by popular agitation. He for a long time gained his living much as a beggar does, who exposes his wounds to the public to elicit donations, and was more successful than most impostors. From beginning to end, his reputation was an accident, which the awkward bungling of the Government fostered. Had Wilkes been successful in getting the governorship of Canada, for which he had applied, the world would never have heard of him, and the cause which he made the pretext of his many battles, would have been won without him, by others more worthy; for such men were not wanting even in those days degenerate. Wilkes was only the man in the gap, who was forced on by the throng behind him.

The worst side of his life was his remarkable perfidy towards his friends. I say nothing of his ingratitude to Lord Temple and John Horne; but what did he do for Churchill? Nothing. Sterne, author of the "Sentimental Journey," he utterly neglected. In 1768 that most gifted but unfortunate genius died, overwhelmed with debt; his body was recognized on the surgeons' dissecting-room table; and his wife and daughter were scarcely able to find the means of subsistence. In their extremity, they applied to two of Sterne's oldest friends, Wilkes and Stevenson, who had admitted him to their boon companionship in the Medmenham orgies. The request was to subscribe to an edition of Yorick's sermons. Both gave promises to do even more—to write a life to be prefixed to the volume. Three months after the application, the widow writes to remind them of their promises. No answer. She writes again, "In pity, do." No reply ever came, and not a page of the life did Wilkes or Stevenson ever write.

Wilkes outlived his popularity. To use his own expressive phrase, his latter days were those of a "fire burnt out." He died at the house of his accomplished daughter "Polly," in Grosvenor

Square, the day after Christmas Day, in 1797. The last statement he made to the world was in strict keeping with the tenor of his life,—a falsehood. He assured his daughter and Mrs. Arnold, his mistress, that they would find a considerable balance at his banker's. On discovery, it was found he was insolvent, and had not left enough to pay the fifth part of his own debts.

CHAPTER IV.

THE QUARREL OF HORNE AND WILKES.

Evil Communications—Vox Populi—A Peculiar Position—Character of Horne—Radical Pioneers—Horne's Faults—Profligacy—Bear-leading—Horne Visits Wilkes—The Montpellier Letter—Deliberate Baseness—Society for the Support of the Bill of Rights—Wilkes's Debts—His Extravagance—A Maxim for Tradesmen—He Threatened Garrick—Verdict against Lord Halifax—The Ingratitude of Wilkes—Public Correspondence—Private Character—Little Presents—The Wildman Episode—The Old Clothes' Incident—Bingley the Printer—Secession from the Society—Separation of Wilkes and Horne.

THE impossibility of touching pitch without being defiled, is illustrated by the controversy which took place between Wilkes and Horne. Much of it is mere dry leaves, possessing no permanent interest; but out of the heap of dead rubbish, nothing will be presented to the reader but what is necessary to throw light on the characters. Horne rendered unquestionable service to popular rights, and gave proofs of his disinterestedness, but all was unavailing; his connection with Wilkes, and the unhappy controversy which sprang from it, entirely blasted his reputation. The mischief done to his character extended also to his political doctrines, which never received the attention or respect which they deserved. To do justice to his career, it is necessary to keep always in view that he was, from first to last, a man who laboured under great and irremovable civil disabilities, arising from the profession into which he had been forced. Horne had an iron constitution, a personal courage rarely surpassed, a perfect command of temper, and all the controversial efficiency of prompt acuteness, satire, and wit. Perhaps no political man ever experienced the same degree of injustice, for his speculations and projects were moderate; he aimed at the public good, and maintained his position with a consistency which put most of his dis-

tinguished contemporaries to shame. It was this same inflexible persistence which brought down on him the opprobrium of the time-serving politicians of his day. Gifted with the talents of a great performer, he was compelled through life to play inferior parts, and this embittered his existence. As a politician he was always below himself, always compelled to act in subordination to his equals, and, for the most part, obliged to work on a level with those whom nature and education had placed at an immeasurable distance beneath him. He began his political career in connection with the Middlesex election, from which, however, Wilkes derived all the glory and advantage. Never was valiant and faithful service so unworthily rewarded. We cannot wonder at Horne afterwards rating popular favour very low, and of his uniformly asserting that if he had not stronger and better motives than a wish to obtain it, he should be a fool to undergo any more political toils, or expose himself to any more political dangers. Horne suffered all his life for his friendship with Wilkes; no after act could purge him from the leprosy which clung to his companion. In vain did he declare that his aid was given exclusively on public, not private, grounds, and that he had a contempt for the name of Wilkes. The stains of the pitch remained; for the public were either heedless or indifferent in examining closely into the matter. Perhaps they concluded that there was not much to choose between either on the score of morality. In the controversy which took place between Horne and Wilkes, the former completely exploded his opponent to atoms. He showed that Wilkes scorned the people as much as he gulled them. The wonder is that Horne's statements did not greatly moderate the popular idolatry of his opponent; in reality it had precisely the opposite effect. It was Horne that suffered; for though neither of the gentlemen deserves to be honoured with a statue, for an example of unsullied purity of personal conduct, still a distinction must be drawn. Perhaps the facts, collected and spread before the reader as they have never been done, may throw light on the subject, and reveal something of more importance,—the spread of liberal thought and action,—of which they, no matter what their private vices, were the undoubted pioneers.

There is nothing that has so unfavourable an effect upon the

heart and understanding, nothing that so completely sours the nature of a man, as long disappointment and continued restraint. By a step taken early in life, Horne was debarred from the fair exercise of those talents with which he was highly gifted, and cut off from the attainment of those objects of which he was most desirous. Accident has a vast share in forming the greatest and the most virtuous of men; and we shall do no justice to the character of Mr. Horne, if we blame him for what he was, without considering what, under more propitious circumstances he might have been. In the essential particulars of truth, honour, and justice; in all that in a popular sense forms the morality of a gentleman, he stood unimpeached; at least, no charge of the violation of them was ever substantiated, although he lived for half a century exposed to the public eye, and beset by the vigilant hostility of active and powerful enemies. His great fault, as an individual, was a libertinism in habits and discourse, which ill became the profession to which he reluctantly belonged and soon abandoned. Profligacy of morals, however, has not in any age or country proved a bar to the success of a patriot or statesman.

When the Wilkes controversy began, Horne was on the Continent. He returned about the end of 1764, and was informed of the political transactions which had taken place in his absence. Horne's sympathy was with the people, and against the Court. He instantly declared himself on the side of Wilkes, without having any personal knowledge of the man; he says, "I contributed my mite to the public cause, by publishing whatever essays, hints, or intelligence I thought might be useful."

The following year Horne went to Italy. In passing through Paris he called on Wilkes, whom he then saw for the first time. The following words throw clear light on a statement of an unguarded character, of which too much has been made by those who were unfavourably disposed towards Horne:—"I thought you at the time sincerely public-spirited, and a man of honour; which, though it does not restrain from bad, prevents men from being guilty of mean actions. I wrote to you from Montpellier, and lest from my appearance you should mistake

my situation,* and expect considerable services from me, I thought it proper to inform you that I was only a poor clergyman, whose situation, notwithstanding his zeal, would never enable him to perform any considerable service either to you or the public." He then went on to allude to the hypocrisy and servility of the clergy, and, to eradicate any prejudice Wilkes might have felt against him because of the hostility manifested by his order to the popular cause, used uncalled-for language respecting ordination, which was made a handle of abuse against him at the time.

If any one considers this explanation, viewed in the light of clerical appointments then made, and the gross and open immorality of the times, they will not be so scandalized as those who isolate particular phrases, and then profess themselves shocked by the profane allusion to the "infectious hand of a bishop,"—a phrase which Horne had incautiously written,—which, after all, may bear the most moderate meaning, without in the slightest degree impugning the spirituality of the episcopal office. Fair play suggests this interpretation.

Wilkes, who had induced Horne to write the letter which contained these and other equally unguarded, though entirely confidential, remarks, kept it, with the view of using it against the writer, should an opportunity of doing so ever present itself. This seems a deliberate act of scoundrelism, which nothing can palliate. Horne, speaking of the time when he met Wilkes, says: "I found you in the most hopeless state; an outlaw, plunged in the deepest distress, forsaken by all your friends, and shunned by everything that calls itself a gentleman, at a time when every honest man, who could distinguish between you and your cause, and who feared no danger, yet feared the ridicule attending a probable defeat. Happily we succeeded, and I leave you, by repeated elections, the legal representative of Middlesex, an alderman of London, and about £30,000 richer than when I first knew you; myself, by many degrees poorer than I was before; and I pretend to have been a little instrumental in all these

* It is probable that Horne was, at the time referred to, arrayed in the lay costume of the period, which he generally adopted when away from England.

changes of your situation. I make no other reflection on your behaviour respecting my letter than barely to say that those who attempt to palliate or justify it will want a justification themselves."

To explain many of the remarks made by Horne in this correspondence, it is necessary to understand the part he had taken in the celebrated "Society for the Support of the Bill of Rights." It owed its origin chiefly to the exertions of Horne. Many gentlemen unconnected with each other had long wished for some such association to be set on foot, and it had been talked of as a measure capable of great public benefit. The occasion of the candidature of Wilkes for the City of London, in March 1768, seemed an opportune occasion for it. It was proposed by Mr. Townsend, a gentleman who knew the character of Wilkes so well, that for a long time he would have no connection with him till talked over by Mr. Horne. The rejection of Wilkes by the House of Commons, and its manifestly unfair treatment of him, had induced Horne to take up his case. He wanted to let the Ministry understand that they would gain nothing by injustice, but, on the contrary, would attach to the cause even those who most heartily despised the man whose name was unfortunately associated with it. It was Horne who drew up the advertisement and declared the purpose of the society to the public. A subscription was opened to pay Wilkes's debts by a few high-spirited gentlemen belonging to the society: the general public cannot be said to have contributed to it. About £1,000 was collected, while his debts amounted to over £6,000; so two-and-sixpence in the pound was offered to such as would accept that composition. As fast, however, as something was paid off by his friends, Wilkes added something likewise to the amount of his debts, till his best friends despaired of extricating him. Another subscription was opened to pay his election expenses. Every day brought fresh liabilities to Wilkes, who all the time felt no distress, denied himself no expense, and was neither sensible nor apprehensive of any disgrace. The just abhorrence in which he was held as a private man, kept many at a distance from the cause of the people, which was unhappily identified with his prosecution; the friends of that cause were therefore anxious to cover, if possible, or lessen the infamy of which he

was careless. After paying about £16,000, Wilkes remained indebted to the amount of £6,821. The society continued to make great progress in the affairs of Wilkes, though with little assistance from the public at large. They paid his fines and election expenses; compounded a considerable portion of his debts, and gave him £1,000 for pocket-money. In the meantime he kept a town and country house; sent his daughter on a visit to Paris; made a tour of the summer watering-places, "starring" through the provinces with a French cook and livery servants.

On hearing that Wilkes had shown Horne's confidential letter to several of his friends, boasting that he had the Rector of Brentford in his power, the latter remarked, "There is nothing in the letter of which I need be ashamed, unless there are any compliments to you; of everything of that kind your subsequent conduct has indeed made me heartily ashamed."

It was a trait of Wilkes's character never to debar himself a single luxury, even to pay his creditors. He was never tired of repeating an old argument which he said justified this conduct. "Those who pay make amends for those who do not; and tradesmen always charge accordingly."

It was about this time that America was in revolt at the threat of taxation. Wilkes had no sympathy with America; he went so far as to express his contempt for the colonies. But when the inhabitants of Boston sent him a flattering letter and a valuable present, he saw much to admire in them. His domineering insolence was also seen in a letter he wrote to Garrick, requesting him not to play the part of Hastings in *Jane Shore*, thinking, with absurd vanity, that some lines in that play were applicable to himself. The strangest part was, that the friends who were most devoted in returning him for Middlesex, and raising money for the election expenses, were the very people who afterwards were most bitterly reviled by this mock patriot. Every day brought him fresh disgrace, yet he was the only one who never felt it or showed any symptoms of shame. To prove how little he was personally esteemed by the society, the members declined to propose his health at their meetings—a great slight in those drinking days, and one which Wilkes never forgave.

Horne was desirous of helping Wilkes, not out of any personal

regard, but merely in the interest of liberty ; he wanted to show that in a free country, a premier, no matter how powerful, could not ruin an individual whose cause happened to be a public one. At the same time he did not approve of his extravagant mode of life, and protested against public funds being devoted to private purposes. This protest led to an open and public quarrel between them. When Wilkes obtained a verdict against Lord Halifax with £4,000 damages for that nobleman's misconduct relative to the general warrants, Horne suggested that at least part of the money should be given to pay his debts—a proposal which Wilkes rejected with the utmost disdain.

Wilkes charged Horne with receiving subscriptions for the weavers of Spitalfields, and mismanaging the funds. There is nothing to justify this charge, except what redounds entirely to the credit of Horne, who was out of pocket by his brave attempt to stop the merciless prosecution of that unhappy body of men. Horne challenged him to name any one who subscribed to this account, and denied the existence of such a fund. Another charge made by Wilkes, which received a characteristic answer, was that Horne received money for different publications. "Sir," wrote Horne, "I shall only answer, what you must already suppose: viz., that, of all the pamphlets I ever wrote in my life, I have regularly received the profits ; and of all which I may hereafter write, I shall, if I please, regularly receive the profits. But that you may not envy me the amazing sum, I will tell you exactly to what they amount. Of all the things I ever wrote in my life, the profits amounted to a sum not sufficient to furnish you with two months' claret."

Most of the independent men belonging to the Society for the Support of the Bill of Rights took the side of Horne, yet the current of popular opinion set against him. There is a particular irony in the fact that at the time Horne was sacrificing all his prospects in life, endangering his health, and erecting formidable spikes of prejudice to hinder his advancement, he was most unpopular, while his profligate and unprincipled opponent was enjoying the favour of the masses. Not in the least daunted, he renewed the bloodless encounter in May 1771, by exposing the character of Wilkes in a correspondence which would fill a volume.

"It is not my intention," Horne remarks in one of his letters, "here to open any account with you on the score of private character : in that respect the public have kindly passed an act of insolvency in your favour."

The retort is worthy of Wilkes, who, whatever his deficiencies in morals, was not wanting in pluck and ability. "I believe, indeed, you will not choose to open any account with me on the score of private character. A gentleman in holy orders, whose hand appears to testify his belief of the articles of the Church of England, the least moral, the least conscientious of men ; whose life has passed in a constant, direct opposition to the purity and precepts of the Gospel ; whose creed, from the first article in it to the last, is known to be *non credo*,—such a person with wonderful prudence chooses not to open any account on the score of private character. I do not mean, sir, to be impertinent enough to a public, whom I respect, to descend to those particulars of private life in which they are not interested, either to accuse you or to defend myself. The frailties of which I have repented I will not justify, but I hope to redeem and bury in oblivion every past folly by great and virtuous actions, by real service to my country."

A few picturesque sentences like the last, give a fair picture of the man's shrewdness. He loved to pose before people as a daring patriot. The public read those letters with avidity. Wilkes must have chuckled as he penned them ; for if one eye was turned towards Horne, the other was directed straight to the gallery. Then he goes on to say, "Your letter of yesterday contains no charge, although it promises many. Every one shall be fully answered. I have only to desire that your future letters may appear before Midsummer Day, because it is possible that by favour of the Livery of London I may, after that time, be wholly engaged in preparing for the duties of a very important office, and the fearful discharge of the sheriff's oath not that you have falsified."

The genuineness of the friendship on Horne's side can be seen from the following letter :—"From this time till your arrival in England, I threw out hints in the papers of your intention to offer yourself a candidate at the ensuing election ; and I endea-

voured, with as much art as I was master of, to let them just be strong enough to make those who wished you well suppose the event possible, without being so strong as to make those who feared such an event suppose it probable. From the time I left you in Paris in 1767, I held no communication with you of any kind whatever; nor did I upon your arrival in England in 1768 even pay you a visit, till it was very evident you lost your election in the City. Then, indeed, I went to you, because I knew I could be useful to you in Middlesex; and I did then, and do still think, that there was no method by which I could do greater service to the public than by espousing your cause, which the weakness and wickedness of our Court had made, to a certain degree, the cause of every Englishman."

When Wilkes paid his private visit to England, he had a difficulty in finding a lodging, for fear of outlawry, until Mr. Wildman, Horne's brother-in-law, offered him hospitality. Wilkes not only accepted this kindness, but utilized his host by causing him to forward sundry articles to Paris—"Little presents to please friends there, to whom he was under obligations."

A list of some of the items may interest the reader, and, in our own day of birthday gifts and Christmas offerings, the choice which Wilkes exercised will perhaps astonish, if it does not assist our generosity.

"Twenty-five bottles of the best Jamaica rum; twenty-five bottles of arrack; three gowns, chintz, one light blue, one pink, and the other fine yellow ground; forty yards of fine flannel.

"Pamphlets:—‘Oronoko,’ as it is acted now; two profligate articles which Mr. Wildman would not furnish; ‘Le Philosophe Ignorant;’ ‘Le Dernier Ouvrage Boulange;’ ‘Everything new from Voltaire.’"

The above articles, to the value of £40, were forwarded to Mr. Wilkes in Paris, and never paid for.

There is something mean in Wilkes's desire to parade his knowledge that Horne dressed and acted abroad in a manner unbecoming a clergyman, though he advances nothing to prove his assertion beyond some insinuations. If he could have laid his hand on any damaging facts, his sense of honour would not have prevented him from using them. Wilkes gives his own report

of the transaction, admitting that the articles were received but not paid for. This explanation is eminently unsatisfactory, and not worth recording. The manner in which he remonstrates with Horne, furnishes another instance of splendid audacity. "You will find, sir, that it requires more memory, as well as wit, than falls to one man's share to support a long chain of falsehoods; you are lost and bewildered in the intricacies of error. The path of truth you would find more easy and honourable." This, with more of the same kind, is a species of mental courage, which becomes classic in its firmness, and shows at once the utter absurdity of arguing with a man of this stamp.

Wilkes next goes on to talk of the "follies of his youth," at the giddy age of forty-seven, as if folly could be the only charge brought against a man who had dissipated a fortune, robbed a hospital, and tried to starve the wife who brought him a dower of £100,000. Horne makes this comment not undeservedly: "I believe you do not impose upon many; the greater part despise the hypocrite who before abhorred the rogue; but however some might be deceived, your conduct did not suffer me, even for a few days, to suppose you a changeling."

Wilkes's life for a long time was a hand-to-mouth concern. Horne says, "My surprise to find any tradesman willing to trust you was the greater because I know several of the fraudulent pretences you have used, since your enlargement from the King's Bench, to obtain goods from tradesmen."

Still Wilkes was trusted again and again. It is idle to deny that the man must have had some wonderfully attractive power which inspired this faith. Perhaps it is not creditable to our common humanity to look too curiously into the dregs of his character to find this fascinating quality, which, if not gold, is an excellent imitation. Honest, self-denying men seldom get praise so profusely bestowed on them as the picturesque rascal who poses gracefully and reaps the benefit.

Wilkes makes frequent reference to what he calls the "old clothes" transaction, thinking that by this he has scored a point, while in reality the ingratitude exhibited thereby damages his own character. "I will only add about the 'old clothes,' that when next you wear red I hope it will be a suit of scarlet and gold,

not 'black dyed red' with the blood of your countrymen"—a gasconading phrase employed by Horne in the Middlesex election in support of the man who reproached him with it. This phrase was taken up by Horne's enemies, and magnified into something diabolical for a clergyman to use.

Again, alluding to Horne's comment on his obtaining goods from tradesmen on fraudulent pretences: "I know Mr. Horne to be 'the father of lies;' I call upon him to produce a single instance, and I dare him to publish everything he knows of me of every kind."

This was simply making a virtue of necessity, for he knew then that the sword was drawn and the scabbard thrown away. Horne, in self-defence, and not without a pardonable sense of anger, was now unmasking the hypocrite, who, perhaps, is the most remarkable specimen of prosperous baseness which history furnishes. Not that there was much to gain by the exposure of one who flatly denied or explained away every point raised against himself. Wilkes conveniently forgot the Wildman incident, and the denial of the letter which was basely kept and treasured for the sake of its unguarded admissions, and which he afterwards made use of with craft to injure Horne. Not the slightest recollection did he show of the misguided woman who rejected an honest man on his account, and whom he attempted to plunder of the miserable £200 a year settled on her. No memory seemed to haunt him of the £990 filched from the Foundling Hospital Fund, which two gentlemen came forward and engaged to pay, in order to save his character with the public. No compunction disturbed his conscience for having dishonoured the wife of his confiding friend, Mr. Bernard, when the guilty woman confessed her story of shame; but his regret was acute when he found that this discovery caused Mr. Bernard to cancel the will by which Wilkes was to have come in for £10,000.

"When I first knew you," Horne writes to him, "in 1768, I knew no more of you than what the papers told me; what I afterwards heard against you on my return, I imputed, for the greater part, to the rage of party and the malice of your enemies. I supposed you liberal in speculation, and not a very rigid moralist in action. I have not at this moment read the 'Essa

on Woman ;' and whatever it may contain, I should have felt more indignation against those who bribed the printer to betray you than against you who were betrayed ; because it was a mean villainy almost equal to the treacherous publication of a private, friendly, and confidential letter ; but a villainy of which you can now complain no longer. In the year 1769 I first knew some of your private character, and no sooner knew than avoided you. Since that time, in the progress of my excessive industry to extricate you from your difficulties, I have to my astonishment found to be true, not only all that has been alleged against you, but much more. However, were it possible to add to the measure private turpitude, it would not prevent me from acting over again in the same manner as I have done ; and were there an election for Middlesex, to-morrow (the right of electors being left unvindicated), or any other point of public concern, the benefit you should receive from my labours or my sufferings should not make me in the least relax the one or decline the other. I was your friend only for sake of the public cause ; that reason, in certain matters, remains ; as far as it remains, so far I am still your friend, and therefore I said in my first letter the public shall know how far they ought, and how far they ought not, to support you. To bring to punishment the great delinquents who have corrupted the Parliament and the seats of justice, who have encouraged pardon and rewarded murder ; to heal the breaches made in the constitution, and by salutary provisions to prevent them for the future,—for these purposes, if it were possible to suppose that the great enemy of mankind could be rendered instrumental to their happiness, so far the devil himself should be supported by the people. For a human interest they should go further ; he should not only be supported, but thanked and rewarded for the good which he did not intend, as an encouragement to others to follow his example. But if the foul fiend, having gained their support, should endeavour to delude the weaker part, and entice them to an idolatrous worship of himself, by persuading them that what he suggested was the voice of God ; if he should attempt to obstruct everything that leads to their security and happiness, and to promote every wickedness that tends only to his own emolument ; if, when the cause, the cause, vibrates on their ears, he should

divert them from the original sound, and direct them towards the opposite unfaithful echo ; if confusion should be all his aim, and mischief his sole employment,—would not he act the part of a faithful monitor to the people who should save them from their snares, by reminding them of the true object of their constitutional worship? This is the cause—to make this union indissoluble, is the only cause I acknowledge. As far as the support of Mr. Wilkes tends to this point, I am as warm as the warmest ; but all the lines of your projects are drawn towards a different centre—yourself ; and if with good intentions I have been diligent to gain you powers, which may be perverted to mischief, I am bound to be doubly diligent to prevent their being so employed.”

The reply of Wilkes to this manly statement was paltry ; he craftily evaded the question at issue, and contented himself with making a jest on one of the observations it contained.

“I wish,” he says, “you would give the list of echoes of this kind which you have heard in your travels through France and Italy. I have heard of the babbling, the mimic, the shrill echo. The discovery of an unfaithful echo was reserved for Mr. Horne. The sound of your unfaithful echo can only be paralleled by Jack Horner’s ‘silence with a stilly sound.’ Really, sir, I should have thought, notwithstanding all your rage, you might have suffered an echo to be faithful. I did not expect novelty or variety, much less infidelity, from an echo. No courtier seems to enjoy the luxury of lying equal to the minister of New Brentford.” Then with a flourish purely addressed to the gallery, he alludes to the office of chamberlainship, which he was privately straining heaven and earth to get, and says, “You and others have warmly and frequently pressed me to offer my services in case of a vacancy. My answer has regularly been, ‘I never will accept it. I know it to be the most lucrative office in the gift of the City, but I can be more useful in my present station. I am not avaricious ; my wishes are few, and easily gratified.’ All my friends know that this has been my constant answer.”

For cool effrontery nothing can surpass this. One wonders whether the boors of Middlesex could swallow it. “Wants few, indeed !” What about the debts, which ran up from £6,000 to £14,000? And the post to which he here professes such

perfect indifference was the one he at last occupied, and gained by every mean trick at his command, just when the public were getting tired of his unblushing rascality.

In reply to a statement of Wilkes that Horne knew him before the quarrel and sneered at his pseudo morality, he received the following rejoinder:—"I have not changed my opinion of you since I knew you at all, except in degree; in that I think I am excusable. My small experience of mankind, and my reading even the exaggerated bad characters of plays and romances, had never furnished me with examples of a character so hideous as yours. Should I never find a second John Wilkes, my whole system of philosophy would be altered."

In reference to what had been done by the Society for Support of the Bill of Rights for the personal benefit of Wilkes, Mr. Horne writes:—"Any one who reads this account will naturally suppose that Mr. Wilkes must have felt and expressed the warmest gratitude to a society like this. Whoever shall suppose so will be much mistaken. He abhorred the society and its members. The declaration of the most respectable part, disclaiming a personal attachment to Mr. Wilkes, and professing only a regard to the public interest, disgusted him extremely; and the advertisement of supporting him and his cause only as far as it was a public cause was never forgiven. He entertained the false notion that had not the society been instituted he would have received all the money which they applied to discharge his debts. This he considered a kind of personal robbery, and hated the society for their care of him."

Wilkes cordially detested Mr. Horne, because he baffled his attempts to narrow the society and convert it into a sponge, which should suck up the generosity of the public, to be squeezed into his pocket. The rupture between Horne and Wilkes was owing to the fact that Horne proposed at one of the meetings of the society that a sum of £500 should be given to Mr. Bingley, the printer of the *North Briton*, who continued the publication of the periodical after Wilkes had given it up. Bingley had been kept in prison for more than two years, on a charge of contempt of court, for refusing to answer before Lord Mansfield certain questions about the publication of a letter of Wilkes for which he

was prosecuted. Wilkes and his supporters opposed this motion, and succeeded in raising a majority against it. A second resolution was passed by Wilkes's immediate supporters: "That no subscription shall for the future be opened in this society for any purpose whatsoever until all the debts of John Wilkes, Esq., be fully discharged or compounded." After this Horne and the most respectable of the original members retired.

The literary contest, of which the above is a brief but faithful abstract, according to the opinion of the writer, ceased after the exchange of several letters. Mr. Wilkes declined to go any further, while, by denying some of the charges and parrying others, he so confused the business, that Horne was defeated, though the weight of respectability was on his side. Still the blundering, irrational mob remained true to their favourite. No correct opinion can be formed of the man without a careful perusal of the correspondence. Mr. Trevelyan, for whose authority I have no respect, in his life of Charles James Fox, in which he brutalizes the character of his hero, whose faults and vices could not prevent him from being one of the most lovable characters in modern history, endeavours to drape the ugly shoulders of Wilkes with the mantle of charity, by representing this talented demagogue as "more sinned against than sinning." I trust I have fairly separated the man from the cause; and while I heartily approve of his action with regard to the latter, I am puzzled to know what data Mr. Trevelyan has for his rose-coloured representation. Perhaps the nephew of the brilliant but at the same time most inaccurate of historians is treading in his uncle's footsteps. This is the only way in which I can account for the unfaithfulness of his picture.

CHAPTER V.

HORNE AS A REFORMER.

The Action of Horne—The Infamous Poll Kennedy—The Case of MacQuirk—Sentence of Death—Triumph of Horne—Brutalizing the People—A Half-penny a Look—Story of Henry Fox—Dying Speeches—The Onslow Case—Speech at the Mile End Assembly Rooms—Petitioning the King—The Repulse—The Newspaper Report—Second Address of the Civic Authorities—Lord Mayor Beckford—The Unspoken Speech—“Nero Fiddled while Rome was Burning”—“Would the Army Fight for Me?”—Farmer George—The Royal Button-maker—Revival of Star Chamber Practice—Horne’s Support of Bingley—Lord Mansfield’s Defeat—His Early History—On a Pony from Perth—The Duchess Sarah—Anecdote—Mansfield’s Timidity—“The Better Day the Better Deed”—The Founder of Commercial Law—The Witch Sentence—Popular Credulity—Weighed against the Parish Bible—Prophecies—Beware of the Third Shock—Death of Lord Mansfield.

HORNE soon became obnoxious to the cause of despotism, from his habit of exposing the misdemeanours of the ministers, through proceedings initiated or supported by him in the courts of law. One or two examples will be given. During Wilkes’s imprisonment, a riot took place in St. George’s Fields, at which an innocent lad named Allen was shot by the soldiers. By the connivance of the ministers, those implicated in the murder were acquitted. This increased the anger of the people against the Tory cabinet. Horne took up the case, and tried to bring the murderers to justice. He was at first promised by the party in opposition that a parliamentary inquiry should take place in regard to the transaction; and owing to this promise, forbore publishing the particulars, contenting himself with stating a few of the facts in a speech to the freeholders of the county, at the Mile End Assembly Rooms.

At this time there were two brothers of the name of Kennedy, who had been convicted of the murder of John Bigley, a watchman,

on Westminster Bridge. Nothing could be advanced in extenuation, and the crime would have been expiated on the scaffold, had it not been for the charms of the infamous Poll Kennedy, a well-known courtesan, who possessed influence enough to get, first a reprieve and then a pardon for them. Horne was aware that in a case of this kind the King's pardon could be of no avail. He retained Dunning at his own expense, but the obstacles thrown in the way of the advocate by Lord Mansfield made it impossible to proceed. It seems that the nobleman with whom Miss Kennedy lived, bought over the wife of the deceased for £800 as compensation. The woman, being avaricious, consented to the bargain, on condition that the whole sum should be paid down in gold.

Horne also interposed to bring Edward MacQuirk, a man of notoriously bad character, to justice, for the murder of George Clarke during the Brentford election. MacQuirk was convicted of the crime, yet the ministers were prevailed upon to grant a free pardon to the offender. In all these cases, with a rare courage and sagacity, Horne took the side of the oppressed. His knowledge of the theory and practice of English jurisprudence was exhibited in a marked degree in the legal controversy which arose out of the case of Doyle and Vallain.

When Horne's particular friends, Townsend and Sawbridge, were sheriffs of London and Middlesex, sentence was passed at the Old Bailey on two men named Doyle and Vallain, in the following words: "You, the prisoners at the bar, shall be taken from hence to the place from which you came, and from thence to the usual place of execution," etc. Afterwards, the Recorder issued an order for their execution, in which he varied the tenor of his former judgment by the following additional clause, intended to aggravate the punishment: "And whereas it hath been duly signified to me that it is His Majesty's pleasure that the said sentence be executed in the most convenient place near Bethnal Green Church, in the county of Middlesex, now it is hereby ordered that the execution of the said sentence be made and done upon them, the said John Doyle and the said John Vallain," etc., etc. Horne condemned this alteration as a palpable deviation from the sentence, and not only denounced every variation on the part of the Executive as

illegal, but maintained that literal obedience to the warrant as altered, would incur the guilt of murder.

The sheriffs, having respect for the authority of Horne, became alarmed, and determined to take legal advice on the matter. A short and simple case was drawn up for them by Horne, and put before Mr. Serjeant Glynn. The learned serjeant confessed to a difficulty in answering the questions. "If the place is a material part of the sentence," he observed, "the omission of which would vitiate the judgment, the execution must be conformable to it, and I know no authority that can justify a deviation from it. The King may pardon all or part of a sentence, but he cannot alter it. The sheriff's authority is the sentence; he is bound to look to it, and see it rightly executed. There are certain cases in which the sheriffs must disobey such commands: viz., if the Crown commands an execution in a private room or a church."

As this answer was not satisfactory, the sheriffs petitioned the King, and addressed a letter to the Secretary of State, communicating the opinion of counsel. A few days afterwards, the Lord Chancellor stated that the case and question had been referred to the twelve judges. Ultimately the opinion of Horne was confirmed by the judges, the highest authority in the realm, and this great success raised him still higher in the estimation of his countrymen.

A few words on the ordinary procedure at public executions will not be without interest in this place. In those days, as our criminal law was administered by corrupt and ignorant judges, it had the effect of brutalizing the minds of the people. Executions, not only for murder, as now, but also for robbery and other crimes, were of frequent occurrence, and they were sometimes accompanied by quartering and disembowelling the unfortunate criminals. The scene of executions was not always in one place, but at various parts of the town, where they might be supposed to strike greater terror into the minds of the offenders. The dismembered portions of the bodies of criminals were exposed to the public gaze in different places, and people made a trade of letting out spy-glasses at the low charge of halfpenny to enable their customers to feast their eyes on the heads of rebels and other objects of horror affixed on Temple Bar and elsewhere. In one case, the head of a murdered man, then unknown, was set forth on

a pole in the churchyard of St. Margaret's, Westminster, in the hope that the features might be recognized, and that by these means a discovery of his identity might be made. The practice of exhibiting these ghastly spectacles encouraged a morbid taste even among the educated, notably so in the case of Mr. Selwyn, who missed no opportunity of inspecting decayed or mutilated humanity. It was *à propos* of this degraded fancy that the story is told of Henry Fox, when confined to his room, charging his servant, "If Mr. Selwyn calls, show him up; if I am well I shall be glad to see him, and if I am dead he will be glad to see me."

Criminals were in those days allowed to practise oratory on the scaffold to crowds which thronged from all quarters to witness the horrible spectacles. The burthen of those speeches was often of a vindictive character. One man requested the people to carry his body and lay it at the door of Mr. Parker, a butcher in the Minories, who, it seemed, had been the principal witness against him, and this was accordingly done. Cornelius Saunders, who stole £50 from a Mrs. White, in Lamb Street, Spitalfields, preferred a similar request, to the great indignation of the old lady. The mob, with malignant humour, regarded these last words as sacred, and took a diabolical pleasure in fulfilling to the letter the senseless requests of all criminals. The Tyburn gallows stood upon the present site of Connaught Place, and had been used for hanging since the days of Henry IV. Horne's proceedings bore the result of limiting executions to an authorized place; and in so far as he thereby helped to lessen their brutalizing influence upon the age, he is entitled to grateful remembrance in the present day.

The next occasion on which Horne distinguished himself was in a controversy with George Onslow, whom he charged with an act of flagrant corruption, and who repelled the accusation with a pointed disavowal. The report of this correspondence occupies a whole pamphlet. It is enough for our purpose to state that Onslow was at first a supporter of Wilkes and the people; but on being admitted into favour by the Court, obtained office under the Grafton administration, and then deserted the popular cause. Horne's charge was based upon the following scandal:—A certain lucrative post in the administration was disposed of to a gentleman who paid £1,000 into the hands of a third party. Horne dis-

covered the job, and called upon Onslow, as the guilty person, to give an explanation. It is not quite clear that the charge was brought home to the right person, but there was no doubt of the disgrace attaching to the transaction. Horne, defeated at first, stoutly fought the matter through the courts to a third trial, in which he was completely victorious; and it was a victory over a much greater personage than his immediate antagonist, for he defeated Lord Mansfield himself, in a manner so marked and decisive, that it must have caused that haughty judge extreme mortification. One of the trials was moved for in the Court of King's Bench, on the ground of "misdirection on the part of the judges," and showed that Lord Mansfield had delivered a charge, in express violation of the received principles of law. The victory proved, in the face of the whole nation, that the Lord Chief Justice, great and able as he was, could not be considered infallible.

At this period, the ministers of the Tory cabinet were most unpopular, and Horne expressed the feelings of the time in a speech at the Mile End Assembly Rooms thus: "Your Majesty's servants have attacked our liberties in the most vital part; they have torn away the very heart-strings of the Constitution, and have made those very men the instruments of our destruction whom the law has appointed as the immediate guardians of our freedom. Yet although we feel the utmost indignation against the factions, the honest defenders of our rights and Constitution will ever claim our praise; but that the liberties of the people have been grossly violated by the corrupt influence of ministers since the days of Sir Robert Walpole is too notorious to require either illustration or comment."

There were various petitions from Surrey and Middlesex, requesting the King to dissolve the Parliament and dismiss his present ministers. At the same time the Lord Mayor, aldermen, and livery of the City of London, in common hall assembled, resolved on "an humble address, remonstrance, and petition." On this occasion the citizens complained to the sovereign, "that under the same secret and malign influence, which through every successive administration has defeated every good and suggested every bad intention, the majority of the House of Commons have deprived your people of their rights. They have done a deed

more ruinous in its consequences than levying of ship-money by Charles I., or the dispensing power exercised by James II."

His Majesty's answer to this plain speech was, "that the contents were disrespectful to him, injurious to his parliament, and irreconcilable with the principles of the Constitution."

Horne was so intimate with the mayor and aldermen of the City, and they had such confidence in his ability, that it was no wonder they had employed him to draw up this remonstrance. He transmitted it to the *Public Advertiser*, accompanied with an account of the ungracious reception experienced by the citizens, when it was presented. After His Majesty had done reading his speech, the Lord Mayor and aldermen had the honour of kissing his hand; upon which, as the deputation was withdrawing, His Majesty instantly turned round to his courtiers and burst out laughing. "Nero fiddled while Rome was burning" was the satirical comment on this episode. For this impudent publication, a prosecution was commenced on the part of the Crown, but it was afterwards deemed advisable to drop further proceedings.

After this, the usual fulsome addresses from both Houses, in the name of themselves and the people, were offered to the King, "rejecting with disdain every insidious suggestion of those ill-designing men, who are in reality undermining the public liberty under the specious pretence of zeal for its preservation," etc., etc.

George III. censured the address of the civic authorities of the City of London, and they, indignant at the affront offered them by the sovereign, and fired by the patriotic spirit which had always characterized their body, waited upon him with another address, drawn up entirely by Horne, couched in the usual loyal language, but reiterating their prayer for the dismissal of the ministers and the dissolution of Parliament. It fell to the lot of William Beckford, Chief Magistrate of the City, to address the King at the head of the deputation.

The citizens were again repulsed, and told that to accede to their request would imperil the royal prerogative, and prove dangerous to the Constitution of the country. Horne, anticipating such a result, had furnished the Lord Mayor with what he conceived to be such a reply as ought to be given. But Beckford got so confused in the presence of royalty that he could not

remember, at any rate could not utter, the speech which Horne had prepared for him. On meeting Beckford in St. James's Street on his return from his unpleasant interview, and learning from him that, owing to his confusion he did not know what he said, Horne cried out, "But your speech must appear in the papers, and I will write it for you." This was accordingly done; and next day a speech, purporting to have been delivered in the presence of royalty by Lord Mayor Beckford, but no word of which had been spoken, was printed in all the newspapers. The incident somehow or other never became generally known; and the natural consequence was, that Mr. Beckford became one of the most popular of Lord Mayors on account of his supposed patriotism, his independence, and the fearless manner in which he had confronted the monarch in vindicating the cause of civil, political, and religious liberty. A fine statue of Beckford was some time afterwards erected in the Guildhall to commemorate this great event which never took place, with the invented speech which had been put in his mouth, carved word for word on the marble of the pedestal. The gist of the speech may be seen in this paragraph: "Permit me, Sire, to observe, that whoever has already dared, or shall hereafter endeavour, by false insinuations and suggestions to alienate your Majesty's affections from your loyal subjects in general, and from the City of London in particular, is an enemy to your Majesty's person and family, a violator of the public peace, and a betrayer of our happy Constitution, as it was established at the glorious Revolution." On this, as on the former occasion, Horne described the procession, the speech of the Recorder, and the rejoinder of the Lord Mayor in the newspapers, and wound up by this passage: "N.B.—The above writer having given offence to some persons by inserting in a former paper that 'Nero fiddled whilst Rome was burning,' and information having been filed by the Attorney-General against the printer in consequence, he takes this opportunity to declare, that it was not his intention to falsify an historical fact, or to give offence to better memories; he hopes, therefore, that it will be admitted as a recompense, if he now declares that Nero did not fiddle whilst Rome was burning."

Many of the towns and counties followed the example of the capital in attacking the Court measures, asking for the dismissal

of ministers, and praying for a dissolution of Parliament, which by its venality had lost the confidence of the country. This gave great offence to the King, who suggested the severest measures. "Granby, do you think the army would fight for me?" asked he; to which the noble marquis replied, "I believe, Sire, some of the officers would, but I'll not answer for the men."

At the commencement of the session of 1770, the King's speech began with an allusion to some disease which had broken out among horned cattle, instead of alluding to the violent agitation under which the kingdom then laboured. This brought down abundance of sneers on "Farmer George." It was said that he cared more for his farmyard than for his people. It was further understood that the royal leisure at Kew was often occupied in turning a lathe, and other amusements, and that royal ingenuity had gone so far as to construct a button. The crime of button-making was, in popular ridicule, long coupled with the dignities of the British crown, to the no small annoyance of His Majesty. The King is said to have consented only with extreme reluctance to receive another deputation bearing a remonstrance on behalf of the City of London. It was carried to St. James's by the Lord Mayor, attended by a numerous body of Common Councilmen and City officers, and accompanied by an immense mob. The King received it on the throne with a lowering countenance, and gave a rebuking answer, concealing his anger with difficulty. Some of the courtiers, also, are said to have used impatient gestures, and to have held out indecent threats of depriving the City of its liberties. The Court at once resolved to proceed with rigour against the persons chiefly concerned in setting up this petition; but these proceedings were subsequently relinquished by the urgent advice of Lord North and the more moderate of the ministers, which caused the King to complain in private that his ministers did not support him in bridling the insolence of his subjects.

A number of caricatures exhibited in rapid succession the bitter sentiments of the popular party at the treatment experienced by their petitions and remonstrances. One of the comic papers had a caricature entitled "The Button-Maker," which represented the mayor and sheriffs presenting a remonstrance, to which the

King is refusing to listen ; exclaiming, as he shows his buttons to two noblemen in waiting, " I cannot attend to your remonstrance ; do you not see that I have been employed in business of much more importance ? " One of the noble attendants observes, " What taste ! what elegance ! Not a prince in Europe could make such buttons ! " while the other courtier in the same strain adds, " What genius ! Why, your Majesty is a born button-maker . "

Although these events were succeeded by an appearance of tranquillity, the fate of the City remonstrances continued long to be a subject of discontent ; and the occupation of button-making was sung in the streets in ballads and lampoons, with obstinate perseverance. In another print published a few weeks later, Farmer George is seen in slovenly garb, attending to his nursery, utterly indifferent to the grievances of his country.

Mr. Horne obtained another victory over the Lord Chief Justice on a point of law, which added very much to his reputation as a disputant, while Lord Mansfield, in the same proportion, lost the public favour. Bingley, the printer, had been prosecuted for publishing a letter from Mr. Wilkes, reflecting on the administration and the courts of justice. As the evidence was too defective to obtain a conviction, Lord Mansfield adopted an illegal mode of proceeding, never practised since the abolition of the Star Chamber, by trying to exact a confession of guilt from the person accused. He made a rule of court for this express purpose, and appointed a day for Bingley to answer certain questions, on failure of which the prisoner was to be committed for contempt of court. The doctrine that a conviction might be secured by means of interrogations without the intervention of a jury, had formerly been acted upon in the ecclesiastical courts of this country, until it was enacted by statute that it should not be lawful for any bishop or ecclesiastical judge to tender or administer any oath whereby any person might be compelled to confess, accuse, or purge himself of any criminal matter by which he might be liable to punishment. Our municipal tribunals never once entertained the idea of obliging a man to disclose his own guilt, but Lord Mansfield chose to consider this particular case as a flagrant contempt of court. On such occasions, an attachment usually issues, and the party must stand committed, or put

in bail, in order to answer upon oath to such interrogatories as shall be administered to him. This was precisely Bingley's case. Horne studied the law of the matter, and having thoroughly qualified himself, rejoiced at the opportunity of vindicating the principles of our municipal code, and at the same time humbling the despot of the law. He at once called upon Bingley, explained to him the gross injustice of the action brought against him, supplied his necessities, and encouraged him to resist any interrogatories put to him, promising a subscription which would fully indemnify him for the losses he had sustained. It is much to this poor man's credit that he held out, for he might at any time have been liberated on making a formal acknowledgment of his delinquencies.

Before such a case, supported by so much intrepidity, Lord Mansfield was obliged to give way. Tired with a struggle which laid him open to the most invidious accusations of his enemies, and alarmed at the threats of a parliamentary investigation, he reluctantly consented to yield. Bingley was set at liberty, neither ruined nor dismayed by his contest with the Lord Chief Justice. Thus the nation is indebted to the pertinacity of a poor printer, supported by the efforts of John Horne, for the abolition of a practice, obsolete and calculated to revive some of the tyranny and injustice perpetrated under the Stuart kings. It will be remembered that Horne proposed at one of the meetings of the Society for the Support of the Bill of Rights, that a sum of £500 should be given to Mr. Bingley to indemnify him for his losses, and as a testimony to his courage in winning a great and lasting advantage to the community at large. The patriot Wilkes was the first to denounce this proposal, which disgraceful act led Mr. Horne and others to withdraw from the Association.

Frequent reference has been made to the Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench, and, as he filled an important station during the time under review, a brief sketch of him will assist the reader in understanding the history of the period. Lord Mansfield was the first Scotchman who gained distinction in the profession of the law in England. He was a connecting link between the reign of Queen Anne and the Georgian period. It is curious to trace the steps by which, after riding on a wretched Scotch pony from Perth to

London, he became a most distinguished advocate in England, and the greatest criminal judge. Lord Thurlow said of him, that "he was a surprising man, ninety-nine times out of a hundred he was right in his opinions, once in a hundred times he was wrong, and ninety-nine men out of a hundred would not discover it."

A story is told which gives us an idea of his character. An author once called on the Chief Justice, asking if he would furnish him with materials to write his biography. "My success in life is not very remarkable," was the reply. "My father was a man of rank and fashion; early in life I was introduced into the best company, and my circumstances enabled me to support the character of a man of fortune. To these advantages I chiefly owe my success; and, therefore, my life cannot be very interesting." This was nothing more than an ebullition of aristocratic insolence from the son of a needy Scotch peer. His circumstances did not enable him "to support the character of a man of fortune," nor did he owe his success to the advantages enumerated. His father, Viscount Stormont, was as poor as poverty could make him, and he had the misfortune to marry an offshoot of the Buccleugh family with a slender portion. She bore him no less than fourteen children; the young "man of fortune," the fourth of the brood, being reared on the national diet, a portion of which he used to carry in a bag tied round his neck when he went to school, which, varied by what fish he could catch in the river, was his patrician fare. He ran about barefooted with the sons of the neighbouring gentry. This is no reflection on oatmeal porridge and bare breeks, but it is hardly the fare of a young "man of fortune." Dr. Johnson would not allow Scotland to derive any credit from Lord Mansfield, as he had been reared in England; observing, with that insular prejudice which is one of his characteristics, "Much may be made of a Scotchman if he be caught young." But Scotland must not be defrauded of her great men, and William Murray, Earl of Mansfield, certainly deserves the title of a great man. He early lost his Scotch accent by leaving the country and never returning to it, even to visit his ailing mother. The judge lived to a great age, and both parents survived him. Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, was one of his clients, and, as might be expected, a troublesome one. She used to visit him at very unreasonable

hours. On one occasion, when late at night he came home to his chambers, he found them almost blocked up by a splendid equipage, footmen and pages with torches in their hands, and the duchess seated in his consulting chair. Instead of making an apology, she addressed him thus : " Young man, if you mean to rise in the world you must not sup out."

Another night, when, after the conclusion of a very long trial, he was indulging in a conversation with his friends Pope and Bolingbroke, the duchess again called, and having in vain awaited his return till past midnight, went away without seeing him. His clerk, giving him an account of the visit next morning, said, " I could not make out, sir, who she was, for she would not tell me her name ; but she swore so dreadfully that she must be a lady of quality."

Lord Mansfield was in his youth a Whig. On the accession of George III. he became a Tory. In the case of the revolt of the colonies in America, he advised crushing the rebellion and preserving British ascendancy. He supported Lord North against all the proposals which were pressed upon him for renouncing our supremacy, and making concessions with a view to conciliation. He was the Duke of Grafton's adviser in carrying on the government on Tory principles, persisting in American taxation, and the disqualification of Wilkes. He believed in the divine right of kings. His great rival was Pitt, whose power he coveted, while he silently quailed under his glance. He was at one time a great friend of Bute, and tried to help him, but the friendship did not continue. One of the first causes of outcry against Mansfield was when Wilkes appeared before him at the Court of King's Bench to get his outlawry reversed, so as to enable him to take his seat. The Lord Chief Justice committed him to prison, till the validity of his outlawry could be decided in due form of law, refusing bail. The mob were exasperated, attempts were made to rescue Wilkes, dangerous riots ensued, some lives were lost, and denunciation and threatenings were poured out against Mansfield.

In the early part of his career the learned judge met with a disappointment in a love affair. The father rejected him on the grounds of poverty, requiring a sight of his rent-roll, not being content that his daughter's jointure and pin-money should be charged

upon the "rood of ground in Westminster Hall." The lady married a squire of broad acres in a midland county. The luckless lover took a cottage on the banks of the Thames near Twickenham, to which he retired to nurse his grief, cheered by the society of his faithful friend Pope. Perhaps he lost very little by the disappointment, for in 1788 he married the daughter of the Earl of Winchelsea, by whom he gained wealth, connection, and friends. The union was a happy one.

Mansfield's judgments on some of the recent trials gave great dissatisfaction. He was generally believed to have acted corruptly, and was compared to Jeffreys and Scroggs. Walpole says in his memoirs, "Lord Mansfield endeavoured by the most arbitrary constructions to mislead the jury, telling them that they had nothing to do with intention, or the words of the indictment. The despotic and Jesuitical judge went further. He said the business of the jury was to consider whether the blanks were properly filled up; as to the contents of the paper, whether true or false, they were totally immaterial. It did the jury honour that they preferred liberty to the voice of the Inquisition. What criminal could be more heinously guilty than such a judge?"

It is not easy for a judge to give satisfaction in every case; but all agree that Mansfield was wanting in moral courage, that he envied the ascendancy of Chatham, and showed the white feather before Lord Camden, who was his inferior in mental gifts. He presided in the Court of King's Bench for thirty-two years. His tastes were classical; he was fond of letters, an elegant and adroit speaker, supple in argument, too timid for a shining statesman, or even a liberal one, and his chief field of distinction was in judicial administration. By improvements in practice, and unusual promptitude of decision, he kept his court free of arrears; and though, during the American wars, the number of causes annually disposed of averaged eight hundred, hardly one of his decisions was reversed. He looked more to justice than strict law in his adjudications, and, except in libel cases, inclined to a liberal interpretation of legal dicta, and their adaptation to existing usages. The growth of commerce brought before him many novel and intricate questions of mercantile rights; these he tried to settle upon general principles; and to him this country is

mainly indebted for its commercial law, especially the part of it bearing on contracts and bills of exchange.

Lord Mansfield was so averse to procrastination, that, having once expressed his intention of proceeding with a certain measure on the following Friday ; on being reminded by Serjeant Davey that it would be Good Friday, he exclaimed, "Never mind ; the better the day the better the deed." "Your lordship will do as you please," responded the learned serjeant : "but if you sit on that day, I believe you will be the first judge who did business on Good Friday, since Pontius Pilate."

He was not devoid of humour. An old woman was once brought before him, charged with practising witchcraft. Several witnesses deposed to having seen her walking with her feet in the air, and her head downwards. The judge, after listening with the greatest composure to the depositions, observed with great solemnity, "Since you have seen this poor woman walking in the air, though her legs are scarcely able to support her on the earth, I can, of course, entertain no doubt of the fact. But this witch is an Englishwoman, and subject as well as you to all the laws of England, every one of which I have just run over in my mind, without being able, I assure you, to hit upon any one which prohibits persons from walking in the air, if they should find it convenient. All those persons, therefore, who have seen the accused perform her aerial promenades, are at liberty to imitate her example ; they have an undoubted right to do so, and I will guarantee the most perfect impunity. They shall no more be considered guilty than this poor woman, whom I pronounce innocent, and direct that she shall be set at liberty."

The judge died in 1793 in a lethargic sleep. He had no illness, but the wheels of the machine being worn out, it stopped. His will was written by his own hand on a half-sheet of paper, with a total omission of all legal verbiage, leaving £26,000 a year to his nephew, Viscount Stormont.

These were the times of intense credulity, when farmers and country folk in general spent their winter evenings in relating stories of witches, ghosts, and hobgoblins. One cannot wonder at the effects produced. In February 1759 the Annual Register tells us of a certain Susannah Hannocks, an elderly woman living

near Aylesbury, who was accused by a neighbour of bewitching her spinning-wheel, so that she could not make it go round. She offered to make oath of this before the magistrate, on which Susannah's husband, in order to justify his wife, insisted that she should be tried by the church Bible, and that the accuser should be present. Accordingly the supposed witch was escorted to the parish church, where all the neighbours were assembled. Here she was stripped naked, and weighed against the large Bible; where, to the no small mortification of her accuser, she outweighed it, and was thus honourably acquitted.

Again, we find that in Glen, in Leicestershire, a dispute arose between two old women of the place, one of whom called the other a witch; the latter affirming that she was no more a witch than her accuser, a challenge ensued, both agreeing to be dipped by way of trial. They accordingly stripped, had their thumbs tied to their great toes, a cart rope fastened round their waists, and in this way suffered themselves to be thrown in a pond of water. One of them is said to have sunk, while the other continued struggling on the surface, which the mob called swimming—under those circumstances deemed an infallible sign of being a witch. So strong was the verdict of guilt passed, that they tried to force her to impeach her accomplice in the craft.

Another instance of credulity was exhibited on the 8th of February in the year 1750. Several sharp shocks of earthquakes were felt in England during an unusually stormy season. The inhabitants of London were alarmed by a rumbling noise; all the houses shook with such violence that the house-bells rang, and furniture and utensils were moved from their places. On the same day of the next month, a second shock was felt between the hours of five and six in the morning, which was considerably more severe than the former, and caused greater consternation because it awoke people from their sleep. Many persons started from their beds and ran to the doors and windows in dismay. The alarm caused by these two earthquakes was seized upon by the religious enthusiasts of the day as a pretext for admonishing people of the immorality and profanity which then so widely pervaded society. The Church, in some degree, caught up the same cry, and a pastoral letter from the Bishop of London became

the subject of severe stricture. Books on earthquakes issued from the press with great rapidity. A soldier from the Life Guards, who had been driven mad by attending the preaching of Methodist enthusiasts, ran about the town, crying out that on the same day four weeks hence another earthquake would swallow up the whole of London, and destroy its inhabitants as a punishment for their sins; he announced that Westminster Abbey would be burnt, and the ruins disappear for ever. The prophet was arrested and placed in a mad-house, but this did not calm the fears of the multitude, which increased as the fatal day approached. The popular credulity was so great that on the 1st of April some hundreds of people went through a heavy rain to Edmonton, upon the report that a hen had laid an egg there the day before, on which was inscribed in large capital letters the words: "Beware of the third shock!"

CHAPTER VI.

LIBERTY OF THE PRESS.

Horne defies the Government—Arrest of the Printers—Insulting the King—Support of the City Magistrates—Brass Crosby—Committing the Messenger—At the Bar of the House—A Letter to the Speaker—Privileges of the City—Magistrates sent to the Tower—Expunging the Minutes—Release of the Printers—Mr. Fox's Speech—Chatham on the Proceedings of the House—Report of Debates Permitted—Power of the Press—Early History—Licensing Act—Scroggs and Jeffreys—Corruption and Cruelty of the Judges—Swift on Scroggs—Milton on Unlicensed Printing—The Press in Queen Anne's Day—Caricature—Its Influence—Junius—Characteristics—Prosecution of Woodfall—Junius attacks Horne—The Reply—Extract from Correspondence—Junius Defeated.

IT was the opinion of Mr. Horne that the publication of the debates in the House of Commons would operate as a powerful check and restraint both on members and parties, and that the people at large had a right to be acquainted with the conduct and opinions of their representatives. For some time he contemplated taking action in the matter, and was restrained only by the influence of friends. The action in the Bingley case, with its successful termination, determined him to hesitate no longer. He consulted with the heads of the Rockingham and Shelburne parties, who, not unwilling to add to the discomforts of their opponents in office, readily promised him their assistance, never thinking that he could effect any change. His next step was to look out for a printer courageous enough to act in defiance of the resolutions recently moved by Mr. Onslow and confirmed by the House, which were as follows: "Resolved, that it is an indignity to, and a breach of, the privileges of this House for any person to presume to give in written or printed newspapers any accounts or minutes of the debates or other proceedings of the House or any of the committees thereof. That, upon the discovery of the

authors, printers, or publishers of any such written or printed newspapers, the House will proceed against such offenders with the utmost severity."

Horne prevailed on the proprietors of two newspapers—*The Gazette*, printed by R. Thompson; and *The Middlesex Journal*, by J. Wheble—to violate these resolutions of the House by giving the debates as usual. The leaders of the Opposition drew back, afraid to give the support they promised. Nothing daunted, Horne determined to persevere. Fortunately the City magistrates showed more courage and independence. The House of Commons, to support its own dignity, commenced an attack on the newspapers in question; both Wheble and Thompson were summoned to attend the House, and made no response. Not having appeared even at a fourth summons, the House resolved to take both printers into custody for disobeying the orders of the House. Next, the King was advised to issue a royal proclamation for the apprehension of Wheble and Thompson, with the promise of a reward of £50 for their arrest. Horne showed that this course was illegal, and that Parliament thereby attributed to their own vote a power of superseding the whole administration of criminal and civil justice. All the scenes of riot which had so lately followed the Middlesex election were repeated. The carriages of leading supporters of the Ministry were attacked and broken, Lord North narrowly escaped with his life, and the King was hissed in the streets. Horne applied to the City magistrates to protect the printers, who resided within their jurisdiction. Some of the magistrates, among whom was Wilkes, at first declined to oppose the resolutions of the Commons aided by the proclamation of the Crown. Brass Crosby, the Lord Mayor, and Mr. Oliver alone stood by Horne, and promised to vindicate the liberty of the press. A few days afterwards, some one was found to arrest Wheble and Thompson; they were brought before the magistrates, and at once discharged. The Lord Mayor committed the messenger of the House for seizing a third printer, named Miller, and a mittimus was sent out, signed by him and two magistrates. The act of the City magistrates in thus braving the decision of the House of Commons was communicated to the House by Sir Fletcher Norton, the Speaker, and caused that

august body much consternation. The Lord Mayor and his brother magistrates were summoned to appear in their places in the House, and Wilkes at the bar. The latter was not present, but wrote a letter stating that he was willing to appear in his place in the House, but absolutely declined to appear at the bar. The Lord Mayor and Oliver duly attended, and the former defended himself with great dignity and simplicity, alleging his oath of office, which obliged him to preserve inviolate the franchises of the City, the charters of which secured the citizens from any law processes being served upon them except by their own officers, and the confirmation of those charters by Act of Parliament. The Lord Mayor admitted the accusation, but showed no signs of fear, repentance, or contrition. Mr. Wilkes's letter was read to the House by the Speaker from the chair, and a new summons was issued for the 8th day of April following, although it was well known that he could not appear on that day. To conceal his disobedience from the public, and to prevent such a humiliating example of contumacy, the House was adjourned on the 30th of March. By this act the House put itself in the wrong, and perhaps never so greatly disgraced itself. Oliver and Crosby were sent to the Tower. Their residence there was one continuous triumph. After six weeks' detention, their release was welcomed by a salute of twenty-one guns belonging to the Artillery Company, and they were escorted to the Mansion House by an immense crowd of enthusiastic admirers. That night London was illuminated, and the windows of the Speaker's house were broken by the mob. The most serious blunder perpetrated was, that after committing the members to the Tower, the minutes of the judicial proceedings of the City magistrates were expunged by the authority of the House of Commons. This illegal proceeding Lord Chatham wisely designated as the act of a mob rather than a senate. The corporation voted their thanks to the incarcerated members, presented them with gold boxes, and hailed them as men who had at once vindicated the privileges of the City and the freedom of the press. The printers remained at liberty, and from thenceforth reports of the debates were tacitly permitted. The nation was thus enabled systematically to study and to judge the proceedings of its

representatives, and the press made a great stride in political importance. Fox, a little later, declared that the only method of preventing misrepresentation was by giving more publicity to the debates and decisions of the House, since the surest way of killing a lie was to multiply the witnesses. This was a sweeping and explicit recantation of his former objection to the publication of debates. Sheridan, still later, when so-called Liberals bemoaned the licence of printing, said, "That the press should be unfettered, that its freedom should be commensurate with the freedom of the people and the well-being of a virtuous state;" and concluded his speech in the following words: "Give them a corrupt House of Lords, give them a venal House of Commons, give them a tyrannical prince, give them a truckling court, and let me have an unfettered press,—I will defy them to encroach a hair's breadth upon the liberties of England." The press is now a potent power in English politics. Of all the instruments which human wisdom has devised, a free press is the most efficacious in putting a stop to abuses and corruptions, which wither beneath the blaze of publicity. It supplies a useful political education; and to thousands who never look into a book, the daily paper possesses a perpetual interest. It is an instructive study to trace the growth of this powerful institution, which has reached its highest development in our own day. Under the Tudors, very stringent laws were passed against the liberty of the press and freedom of speech. Then every publication had to be submitted to the censorship of the bishops, but even this method of control did not protect from punishment. Any one libelling the Queen was, for the first offence, placed in the pillory, and had his ears cut off; and for the second was punished as a felon. John Stubbs and his publisher had each a hand cut off during the reign of Elizabeth. Their offence was not a very serious one—a well-meant but injudicious advice against the Queen's marriage at the ripe age of forty-six, lest her life might be endangered by child-bearing; but the severe penalty of the law did not quench Stubbs's loyalty, for when his right hand was severed from his body; lifting his hat with his left, he shouted; "Long live Queen Elizabeth!"

After the Reformation, the Crown under Henry VIII. assumed the right which the bishops had previously exercised, and the

censorship became part of the prerogative. But the minds of men had been too deeply stirred to submit any longer to ignorance. They thirsted for knowledge, and it reached them through the subtle agency of the press. The theological controversies of the sixteenth century, and the political conflicts of the seventeenth, gave birth to a new form of periodical literature. In the reign of James I. the Star Chamber was liberal in the matter of the pillory and the cutting off of ears.

The first newspaper was started while this monarch was on the throne, but political discussion was silenced by the Star Chamber, the dungeon, the pillory, mutilation, and branding. Never was a more tyrannical spirit exercised than during the days of the first two Stuarts. The Licensing Act placed the entire control of printing in the hands of the Government ; no news could be published without the royal licence. This Act did not expire till the year 1695. The judges, under Chief Justice Scroggs, declared it to be criminal to publish any news whether true or false, without the King's licence. Sir William Scroggs and Sir George Jeffreys share the honour of being considered the most infamous judges who ever sat on the Bench. It was said that Sir William was of mean extraction ; the son of a one-eyed butcher at Smithfield Bars ; but this solution of Scroggs's taste for blood is a pure fiction. He was born and bred a gentleman ; studied at Oxford, was intended for the Church, and might have died an unprosperous curate, were it not that, the civil wars breaking out, he enlisted in the King's cause, and did good service in many a cavalry skirmish. After the war was ended he took to the law, was a student of Gray's Inn, and soon became better known in all the taverns and gaming-houses than in the Courts ; but his love of profligacy did not prevent him from short fits of keen application. Scroggs said he never got drunk except in the company of attorneys, and certainly they did not desert him. The ascent to favour and power was then entirely through the back-stairs, and Scroggs was a man who had neither scruple nor conscience. Human life in those fine old times did not possess the value of elevenpence in brass money ; hanging was a frequent occurrence. A story is told of Scroggs having sentenced to death an old friend with whom he had often got drunk, and by whom he had been beaten at chess. When he saw

his former friend hurried to the Fleet he exclaimed : " And now I think I have checkmated you." Jeffreys, his brother judge, also showed a talent for jesting, even in cases of life and death. Once he had to decide upon a public petition against a great City attorney, a boon companion at the tavern and gaming-table, a man who had given him many a brief at the Guildhall while yet obscure. When this man was threatened with being brought before the Lord Chancellor, he exclaimed, " My Lord Chancellor, I made him ; " meaning that he had laid the foundation of his fortunes by bringing him into City business. Jeffreys, being told of the exclamation, replied, " Well, then I'll lay my maker by the heels," and instantly ordered a commitment to be made out, and sent his old friend to the scaffold with a laugh. Such were the judges under the Stuarts. " You are going the circuit," said Charles II. to his judges, " and it is a hot summer ; pray do not drink too much ; " advice not unnecessary to men whose natural ferocity drinking developed into a furious madness. What would the present age think of a party of cabinet ministers—Jeffreys was one—riotously drunk, stripped to the shirt, and unanimous in their resolve to climb up a signpost, in order to drink the King's health upon the top ? The debauch to which I allude took place at Alderman Duncomb's, and the Earl of Rochester, Lord High Treasurer of England, was one of the most eager of this crew of Bacchanalians to exhibit his loyalty astride the signpost. Such were the men who sat in judgment upon Russell and Sidney, and whose every sentence a triumphant party were ready to ratify. We may smile when we picture to ourselves the actors of this scene in the high celebration of their drunken orgies ; but who would not feel a blaze of indignation at the reflection that the best blood of England has flowed in vain to deliver the country from the hands of those worthless, drunken statesmen ?

Dean Swift, referring to Scroggs, says, " I have read somewhere of an Eastern king who put a judge to death for an iniquitous sentence, and ordered his hide to be stuffed into a cushion, and placed upon the tribunal for the son to sit on who was preferred to his father's office. I fancy such a memorial might not be unuseful to a son of Sir William Scroggs ; and that both he and his successors would often wriggle on their seats as long as the

cushion lasted." However, the infamous judge left no son to succeed him ; he must have been the last of his race, or his collateral relations, ashamed of the connection, changed the name ; for since his death there is said to have been no Scroggs in Great Britain or Ireland.

The reputation of Jeffreys as a lawyer may be inferred from his conduct to his colleagues, towards whom he exhibited the utmost brutality ; in fact, he was imperious to his brother lawyers as well as to the Bar. Once he told his opponent that, from his great age, he must have forgotten most of his law ; getting in return the reply which he never forgot : " Yes, Sir George, I have forgotten more than you ever learned." The end of Jeffreys' career was characteristic. To save himself from a public death, he ended his days by excessive drinking, and at his death confessed that all the blood he had shed, fell short of the King's command, which no doubt was true.

The monstrous judicial absurdity of requiring the sovereign's licence to every printed expression of opinion was not condemned till Lord Camden's time.

Under the Commonwealth, Milton strove in vain, by his celebrated publication, to help the freedom of the press. In his "*Areopagitica*, a speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing," he says, " As good almost kill a man as kill a good book ; who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image ; but he who destroys a good book kills reason itself—kills the image of God, as it were, in the eye." After the Restoration, the old enactments of the Tudors were renewed. It was some time before any abatement of this tyranny took place. The public were left to seek intelligence in the official summary of the *London Gazette*. James II. and his judges carried the Licensing Act to such a barbarous severity, that the whole feeling of the nation recoiled from the injustice. The Revolution brought some indulgence, and the freedom of the press was theoretically established. Every writing could be freely published, but at the peril of a rigorous execution of the libel laws. Scroggs and Jeffreys were no more ; but the law of libel was defined according to the traditions of the Star Chamber, which were accepted as the rule of Westminster Hall. To speak ill of the

Government was a crime; censure of the ministers was held to be a reflection upon the King himself, and thus free discussion was impossible. As soon, however, as the press was released from the grasp of the licenser, it began to give promise of its future energies: newspapers were multiplied; gossip circulated. It was only in the days of Anne that the newspaper began to be published in its present form. The leading article, in which a modern newspaper asserts its own view with a prominence of type and position that adds not a little to its authority, had not yet appeared; as a regular feature it cannot be traced further back than the French Revolution. The political bias of a newspaper was shown by scattered comments, partial selection of news, and especially in letters written for the most part under assumed names.

The reign of Queen Anne was called the Augustan Period, when the press was organized by such men as Pope, Addison, Steele, Swift, and Bolingbroke. In those days every man was a politician, and every party had its own chosen writer. Party rancour ran so high that the House of Commons rivalled the Star Chamber in its zeal against libels. In spite of the removal of the censorship, the press had been slow to attain any political importance; under the first two Georges the worthlessness of the writers and the lethargy of the times was such that the new-born spirit of the press languished for sheer lack of impulse. It was only after the accession of George III. that the influence of Pitt raised the press into a political power.

The preceding age had produced such men as Pope, Fielding and Smollett. Pope, in the "Dunciad," had unsparingly lashed the worthless hirelings and drunken vagabonds from Whitefriars and Savoy, who usurped the rank of men of letters, and who, instead of trying to educate the people, worked in the interest of faction. They sold themselves to statesmen, in order to blacken the character of their rivals, by sending out broadsheets and pamphlets full of abuse, and wanting in everything but baseness and scurrility. The press continued to be the tool of party up to the time of Sir Robert Walpole, who was never much of a reader, and who was indifferent to the attacks made upon him. Yet to his credit it must be said that he never introduced any gagging measures

to check its influence. In the days of George III. the body of readers grew more numerous, and then the press became, for the first time, a powerful friend or a formidable foe to ministers, and as an auxiliary in party warfare its force was acknowledged. The freedom of discussion which then sprang up was previously unknown. Political caricatures were also introduced, being employed not merely to amuse but to aid the political warfare that was then going on.

Caricature is extremely ancient, being found even on the tombs of Egypt; but it was not until the latter part of the seventeenth century that it became a formidable instrument in working upon the feelings of the British populace. It was first imported from Holland, when the Dutch followers of William III. found a footing in England. In the Middle Ages, the song and the lampoon had been constant attendants on the incessant political struggles which were then preparing for the formation of modern society. Many an old manuscript and sculptured block, whether of wood or stone, show that our forefathers understood well the permanent force of pictorial satire. But it was more especially in religious matters that the Middle Ages showed their perception of the importance of appealing through the eye to the heart. During the reigns of the first three Georges, political caricature came into extensive use in England. Then, too, arose those distinctions of political parties; that peculiar spirit of antagonism which exists at the present day, and most of the political questions now in dispute. The period may be divided into two epochs,—the first, that in which the House of Brunswick was established; the second, that in which it was defended from the flood of republicanism which invaded us from France. Comic prints were abundant during the political intrigues of the reign of George II., and they became the rage during the first years of his successor, after which they seemed to languish, until suddenly revived by the brilliant conceptions of Gilray. This able artist was the best caricaturist of our century, and during his career produced a series of prints illustrating the history of the period. Just preceding him, Hogarth had initiated the class of emblematic sketches which can hardly be accepted as caricature.

It was not until the days of George III. that the people began

to exercise a strong influence over their rulers ; and this they achieved by means of an undaunted press, by public meetings, and political associations. Wilkes, and the contest at the Middlesex election, raised the importance of the newspapers to a height which it had never reached before. The Standing Orders of the House of Commons prohibited any report of the speeches ; but at this time a new star, red and fiery as the planet Mars, shone in the political firmament, which soon riveted the attention of all England. Under the signature of "Junius," compositions of extraordinary merit made their appearance in the *Public Advertiser* ; the same paper in which Wilkes, Horne, and most of the distinguished men of the day wrote. Disdaining all blanks and initials, this great writer rushed on his victims in the most personal and malignant manner. The highest names were seized for attack ; the Dukes of Grafton and Bedford, the Earl of Mansfield, and Sir William Blackstone were among the number, nor was it long before the audacity of Junius assailed the Crown itself. The literary merit of these letters was of the highest order, and the style entirely different from the great models of the time. No writer excelled Junius in condensed and virulent invective, rendered more malignant by controlled deliberation of language. Each statement was envenomed by clear and scathing sarcasm. There is in his style nothing that is obscure, nothing that fails to tell ; his malignity is truly fiendish, and uncurbed by any restraint of truth, decency, or honour. Junius received no money for what he wrote ; his object was not so much public applause as the attainment of definite political ends. A great part of his libels was false, or had only a colourable truth ; and the intense personality of the style, with the mystery which surrounded the writer, excited popular interest to the highest degree. The subjects of his satire were generally described as the vilest of mankind, yet when the imputations were examined, they turned out for the most part to be frivolous or absurd. The grounds on which the Duke of Grafton was held up to odium were chiefly his illegitimate descent from Charles II., the mature age and faded charms of his mistress, and his marriage with the cousin of a man who had debauched his first wife. He calls the duke a "minister by accident, adopted without choice, trusted without confidence, and continued without favour." The sense-

less "fragments" of that time, offered incense to the Duke of St. Albans, who owed his origin to Nell Gwynn, an actress and courtesan; to the House of Richmond, whose ancestress was a French mistress; to the Dukes of Buccleugh, who can trace their origin to the infamous Lucy Walters. Royalty, in the good old times, made sensuality so glaring that it blazoned to the world a troop of profligate women by the gift of titles and estates. Junius called attention to this, but he might as well have left it alone. For nearly a year he continued his libels without restraint; but when his letter to the King appeared, the Attorney-General prosecuted Woodfall, who published, and Almon and Miller, who reprinted it. The trial of Almon took place first, and he was found guilty. Woodfall was next arraigned. Lord Mansfield, who tried the case, laid down the extraordinary doctrine that the libellous character of the document was for the judge and not for the jury. The response was an irregular verdict: "Guilty of printing and publishing only." After a long discussion, it was ordered that there should be a new trial; but before this was carried into effect, Miller had been tried at the Guildhall, and, in spite of the clearest evidence of the republication, was acquitted amidst the enthusiastic applause of a great multitude. No attempt was made to renew the prosecution of Woodfall; neither Mansfield, Grafton, nor Bedford prosecuted for the scandalous libels brought against them. The torrent of libel flowed on unchecked and unrestrained, and the writings of Junius became for some time the favourite model of political writers, who, though they could not rival in ability, often equalled and sometimes even surpassed him in scurrility and falsehood.

It was in the year 1771 that Junius first attacked Horne, on the occasion of an election of sheriffs for the City of London. Mr. Oliver, having refused to serve in that office with Wilkes as his colleague,—so contemptible did he consider the character of the patriot,—Horne, as the personal friend of Mr. Oliver, both approved and heartily sympathized with his refusal. Whereon Junius, who for some time had been espousing the cause of Wilkes, in a letter addressed to the Duke of Grafton, charged Horne with deserting the public cause. "The unfortunate success of the Rev. Mr. Horne's endeavours in support of the

ministerial nomination of sheriffs will, I fear, obstruct his preferment. Permit me to recommend him to your Grace's protection. You will find him copiously gifted with those qualities of the heart which usually direct you in the choice of your friendships. He, too, was Mr. Wilkes's friend, and as incapable as you are of the liberal resentment of a gentleman. No, my lord; it was the solitary, vindictive malice of a monk, brooding over the infirmities of his friend, until he thought they quickened into public life, and feasting with a rancorous rapture upon the sordid catalogue of his distresses. Now let him go back to his cloister. The Church is a proper retreat for him. In his principles he is already a bishop. The mention of this man has moved me from my natural moderation. Let me return to your Grace; you are the pillow on which I am determined to rest all my resentment."

This false charge received its reply. Horne admitted that his "clothes were lawful game." Then he categorically denied the charges of deserting the public cause. "You are bound to refute what I have advanced or lose your credit for veracity; you must produce facts; surmise and general abuse, in however elegant language, ought not to pass for proofs; you have every advantage, and I have every disadvantage; you are unknown, I give my name; all parties both in and out of administration have their reasons (which I shall give hereafter) for uniting in their wishes against me, and popular prejudice is as strong in your favour as it is violent against the parson."

A private note to the editor of the *Public Advertiser* showed that Junius here wished to withdraw. This, however, Horne would not permit, so he rejoined, "Sir, I cannot descend to an altercation with you in the newspapers. But since I have attacked your character, and you complain of injustice, I think you have some right to an explanation." Then he proceeds on the doubtful lines designated as "drawing in his horns," and adds, "Neither do I pretend to any intelligence concerning you, or to know more of your conduct than you yourself have thought proper to communicate to the public. It is from your own letters I conclude that you have sold yourself to the Ministry; or if that charge is too severe, and supposing it possible to be deceived by appearances so very strongly against you, what are your friends to say in your defence?"

Then he charges Horne with having sacrificed the cause of the country to gratify his personal hatred of Wilkes, though he makes the admission : " You will not suspect me of setting up Wilkes as a perfect character. The public should, and will forgive him his claret and his footmen, and even the ambition of making his brother chamberlain of London, as long as he stands forth against a Ministry and a Parliament who are doing everything they can to enslave the country, and as long as he is a thorn in the King's side."

Junius admits "that he is far from thinking meanly of Mr. Horne's abilities," and goes on to say, "Yet I confess I am a little offended at the low rate at which you seem to value my understanding. I beg, Mr. Horne, you will hereafter believe that I measure the integrity of men by their conduct, not by their profession. Such tales may entertain Mr. Oliver or your grandmother, but, trust me, they are thrown away upon Junius."

"You have disappointed me," answered Horne. "When I told you that surmise and general abuse, in however elegant language, ought not to pass for proofs, I evidently hinted at a reply which I expected; but you have dropped your usual elegance, and seem willing to try what will be the effect of surmise and general abuse in very coarse language. . . . The charges which Junius has brought against me are made ridiculous by his own inconsistency and self-contradiction. He assigns two inconsistent motives for my conduct—either that I have sold myself to the Ministry, or am instigated by the solitary vindictive malice of a monk. In his letter to the Duke of Grafton, he positively asserts that 'the Ministry have made me promises,' yet he produces no instance of corruption, nor pretends to have any intelligence of a ministerial connection. When Junius is called upon to justify his accusation, he answers, 'he cannot descend to an altercation with me in the newspapers.' Junius, who exists only in the newspapers, who acknowledges 'he has attacked my character' there, and 'thinks I have some right to an explanation;' yet this Junius cannot descend to an altercation with me in the newspapers; and because he cannot descend to an altercation with me in the newspapers, he sends a letter of abuse by the printer, which he finishes by telling me 'I am at liberty to publish

it.' This, to be sure, is a most excellent method to avoid 'an altercation in the newspapers.' He feels no reluctance to attack the character of any man; the throne is not too high nor the cottage too low; he hints not his accusations as opinion, conjecture, or inference, but delivers them as positive assertions. Do the accused complain of injustice? He acknowledges they have some sort of right to an explanation, but if they ask for proofs and facts he begs to be excused; and though he is nowhere else to be encountered, he 'cannot descend to an altercation in the newspapers.' And this, perhaps, Junius may think the 'liberal resentment of a gentleman;' this skulking assassination he may call courage. In all things as in this I hope we differ. But Junius begs me to believe that he measures the integrity of men by their conduct, not by their professions. Sure, this Junius must imagine his readers as void of understanding as he is of modesty. Where shall we find the standard of his integrity? By what are we to measure the conduct of this lurking assassin? And he says this to me, whose conduct, wherever I could personally appear, has been as direct and open and public as my words. I have not, like him, concealed myself in a chamber to shoot my arrows out of the window; nor contented myself to view the battle from afar, but publicly mixed in the engagement and shared the danger. To whom have I, like him, refused my name upon complaint of injury? What printer have I desired to conceal me? In the infinite variety of business in which I have been concerned, where it is not so easy to be faultless, which of my actions can he arraign? To what danger has any man been exposed which I have not faced? Information, imprisonment, or death? What labour have I refused? what expense have I declined? what pleasure have I not renounced? But Junius, to whom no conduct belongs, measures the integrity of men by their conduct, not by their professions; himself all the while being nothing but professions, and those, too, anonymous. But what cares Junius for the security of the Constitution? He has now unfolded to us his diabolical principles. As a public man he must ever condemn any measures which may tend even accidentally to gratify the sovereign; and Mr. Wilkes is to be supported and assisted in all his attempts, no matter how ridiculous and mis-

chievous his projects, as long as he continues to be a thorn in the King's side. The cause of the country, it seems, in the opinion of Junius, is merely to vex the King; and any rascal is to be supported in any roguery, provided he can only thereby plant a thorn in the King's side. This is the very extremity of faction, and the last degree of political wickedness. Because Lord Chatham has been ill-treated by the King, and treacherously betrayed by the Duke of Grafton, the latter is to be 'the pillow on which Junius will rest his resentment,' and the public are to oppose the measures of the Government from mere motives of personal enmity to the sovereign. These are the avowed principles of the man who in the same letter says, 'If ever he should be convinced that I had no motive but to destroy Wilkes, he shall then be ready to do justice to my character, and to declare to the world that he despises me somewhat less than he does at present!' Had I ever acted from personal affection or enmity to Mr. Wilkes, I should justly be despised; but what does he deserve whose avowed motive is personal enmity to the sovereign? The contempt which I should otherwise feel for the absurdity and glaring inconsistency of Junius is here swallowed up in my abhorrence of his principle. The right divine and sacredness of kings is to me a senseless jargon. It was thought a daring expression of Oliver Cromwell, in the time of Charles I., that if he found himself placed opposite the King in battle, he would discharge his piece into his bosom as soon as into any other man's. I go further. Had I lived in those days, I would not have waited for chance to give me an opportunity of doing my duty; I would have sought him through the ranks, and, without the least personal enmity, have discharged my piece into his bosom rather than into any other man's. The king whose actions justify rebellion to his government, deserves death from the hand of every subject. And should such a time arrive, I shall be as free to act as to say. But till then my attachment to the person and family of the sovereign shall ever be found more zealous and sincere than that of his flatterers. I would offend the sovereign with as much reluctance as the parent; but if the happiness and security of the whole family made it necessary, so far and no farther, I would offend him without remorse."

It was some weeks before Junius thought fit to reply to this hard-hitting letter.

"In my own opinion his letter to me does not deserve an answer," writes Junius. "Mr. Horne's situation does not correspond with his intentions. If any coarse expressions have escaped me, I am ready to agree that they are unfit for Junius to make use of; but I see no reason to admit that they have been improperly applied."

The whole of the letter is the composition of a man of powerful ability, but it is equally clear that it is evasive and no manner of reply to the strong charges hurled at him. He even admits some of the unguarded expressions he employed, and unsuccessfully endeavours to explain them away. Horne's last shot at the enemy is characteristic.

"I congratulate you, sir, on the recovery of your wonted style, though it cost you a fortnight. I compassionate your labour in the composition of your letters, and will communicate to you the secret of my fluency. Truth needs no ornament; and, in my opinion, what she borrows of the pencil is deformity. You brought a positive charge against me of corruption. I denied the charge, and called for proofs. You replied with abuse, and re-asserted your charge. I called again for proofs. You replied again with abuse only, and dropped your accusation. In your fortnight's letter there is not one word upon the subject of my corruption. I have no more to say, but to return thanks to your condescension, and to a grateful public and honest ministry for all the favours they have conferred on me. The two latter, I am sure, will never refuse me any grace I shall solicit; and since you have been pleased to acknowledge that you told a deliberate lie in my favour out of bounty and as a charitable donation, why, may I not expect that you will hereafter make the same acknowledgment for what you have said in my prejudice? This second recantation will, perhaps, be more abhorrent from your disposition; but should you decline it, you will only afford one more instance how much easier it is to be generous than just, and that men are sometimes bountiful who are not honest. At all events, I am as well satisfied with your panegyric as Lord Chatham can be. Monument I shall have none; but over my grave it will be said, 'Horne's situation did not correspond with his intentions.'"

CHAPTER VII.

RADICALS IN ACTION.

Popular Notion of Radicalism—Value of Names—Origin of Whig and Tory—The Early Radicals and Popular Representation—Evils of Political Monopoly of the Wealthy—Nepotism—Aristocratic Radicals—First Radical Organizations due to Horne and Cartwright—Legal and Constitutional Objects—Diffusion of Political Knowledge—Annual Parliaments and Universal Suffrage demanded—Yorkshire Meetings—County and Town Meetings—The York Petition—Sir George Savile—Committees of Correspondence—Withdrawal of Aristocratic Members from the Constitutional Society—Movement against Places and Pensions—The Younger Pitt enters Parliament—Close Boroughs—Rev. C. Wyvill—Burke's Motion for Economical Reform—Dunning on the Influence of the Crown—Progress interrupted by the Gordon Riots—New Parliament—Reformers thrown out—Pitt joins the Reformers—Meetings at Thatched House Tavern—Pitt's Motions for Parliamentary Reform—Opposition to the American War—State of Ireland—Burke on Irish Affairs—Grattan's Speech in the Irish Commons—Renewed Movement for Reform—Proposal to purchase the Close Boroughs—Fox and Cartwright on the Subject—Pitt leaves the Reformers—Cartwright and Wilberforce—Short Parliaments—History of Acts on Duration of Parliaments.

WHEN some of the English navigators penetrated the Spanish colony of America, the women, as soon as their alarm had subsided, expressed great astonishment that those brutes whom the Spaniards had called English, and of whom they had heard such frightful descriptions, were men like those of their own nation ; the revulsion of sentiment was favourable towards the English in proportion to the previous injustice done them. They might be men of dangerous opinions, but they were human beings and not monsters. The ignorance of many of our countrymen nowadays of the real character of that terrible animal called a Radical, almost equals that of the superstitious Americo-Spanish women ; kept in the dark by priests, and taught to believe the English an incarnation of the devil in the form of a misshapen brute.

Whole classes in this country delude themselves into the belief that the Radical, though outwardly human, is the most dangerous and degraded specimen of humanity. A mixture of fiend, fanatic and felon, constantly plotting how he may overturn the institutions of society, in order to push respectability from its position. He is imagined to be without natural affection, an infidel and blasphemer, a deserter of all duties, and one wholly given over to a reprobate mind. An aggregate of such profligates, it is said, forms the body of Radicals. What then is the value of a name? Much, when we come to consider it. Take that of Tory, which, though now so perfectly unexceptionable in point of respectability, originally meant something equivalent to the modern Irish Invincible. The title took several generations to grow into general acceptance, and it is doubtful whether it has yet blossomed into a designation of honour. Those who bore it themselves seemed to grow ashamed of it, and, after the reform of 1832, merged it into the more elastic and invertebrate term "Conservative." Whig made slower progress towards dignity. In part of Scotland, Whig was the name of that blue and yellow liquid which gathers on the surface of whey or butter-milk when allowed to settle down. Whig and Tory have, however, weathered their original disgrace, and "Radical" is making more rapid progress towards acceptance and distinction than marked the early history of these words. If men who avow Radical opinions, and glory in being root and branch reformers, would take courage to confess the obnoxious name, frankly and manfully, wearing it with good grace and good-humour, half the difficulty in the way of its general acceptance and esteem would be removed. What yesterday was an epithet of contumely would become to-day a badge of distinction, and to-morrow a title of honour. Radical, in politics means a politician who does effectually whatever he attempts, going to the root of the matter. It is apparent that all men who did any good in the world have been Radicals. To be a non-radical means not doing anything thoroughly. We do not go to a doctor for a cure that is not radical; and if we wish to cure the evils of the body politic, we must seek a cure of the same radical nature.

The first desire of this new party, and the one which continued

on the front of their programme, was to get the people better represented in Parliament. They were confident that if this legitimate object were attained, the condition of the masses would be improved. The rich and titled classes were fruitful in their objections ; they contended that the people did not know how to take care of themselves or of the State. The people never asked to direct the State by themselves, but only to have their voices heard with others. It cannot be denied that the titled classes had had full time and opportunity to prove that, whoever might be fit to direct the conduct of the community, they themselves were not. They had their own way for a long time with the most unfortunate results. A drunken coachman driving his mistress into a ditch, could not give a stronger proof of his unfitness to be entrusted with power than was exemplified by the nobles, except when under the check arising from the admixture and combination of other portions of the community. The rulers could scarcely have brought the people to greater loss and suffering than have been the result of the monopoly of legislation allowed to the wealthy. It is a vulgar error, paraded with the pertness of a copy-book maxim, that the man with the blue "blood" and large rental is the safest to put in a lofty situation, because he has so little to tempt him. The example afforded by the Temples, Foxes, and Granvilles does not justify the saying. It is well known that these favourites of fortune have always an abundance of hungry relatives with whom to share their ill-gotten plunder ; and, if indisposed to this kind of generosity, they are never reluctant to cover their nakedness with every rag of interest they can filch from the State. Besides, they crave for themselves a riband or a garter, or some trumpery distinction, with as much greed as a painted savage covets a scarlet blanket or a string of glass beads. Lord Bute, during a few years in office, managed to appropriate from the national funds over £52,000 a year for his various relatives ; while Lord Holland considered his office a legitimate means of wholesale robbery. For over one hundred and twenty years, from 1688 to 1812, civil government was lost amidst wars in which the public interests were but accidentally concerned ; resulting in a fearful accumulation of debts, which remain a national blister to the present day.

The representation of England a century ago was a sham. Its administrations were the intrigues of corrupt politicians. Pelham boasted, when he gave a peerage to his son-in-law, together with a pension for life, that now no one could say he had not provided for his family. For many centuries, the common people had been of no account; their free and sturdy spirit had often attempted to rise, but was always put down by an overbearing aristocracy. The political influence of this class has never been subdued; at this day it is still preponderant. It is not argued that, because the community has had the misfortune of submitting to aristocratic government, it therefore ought to try the other extreme of ultra democracy, but that it should endeavour towards the attainment of a just medium and combination of all interests and classes, which it requires no supernatural wisdom to perceive would be conducive to the security and happiness of the whole.

To those who question the respectability of the Radical pioneers, it may be a matter of surprise to find that the earliest associations of the party included such aristocratic names as the Dukes of Richmond and Roxburgh, the Earls of Selkirk, Derby, and Effingham, and Lords Surrey, Kinnard, and Semphill, with such eminent commoners as William Pitt, Granville Sharp, General Fitzpatrick, T. Brand Holles, and others; all of whom united themselves without scruple to such well-known Radicals as the Rev. C. Wyvill, Dr. Price, Horne Tooke, Aldermen Sawbridge, Crosby, and others.

Horne Tooke and Major Cartwright may be said to have been the first who endeavoured to organize for practical purposes those who held Radical opinions. Major Cartwright, with the assistance of Dr. Brocklesby, Dr. John Jebb, and Capel Loft, in the year 1780 founded the Constitutional Society, which drew to itself many of the members who had seceded from the Society for the Support of the Bill of Rights, founded by Horne Tooke, and so disastrously shipwrecked by the arrogant and mercenary conduct of Wilkes. The design of the Constitutional Society was to give the public political information, and particularly to promote a recovery of what they conceived to be the lost rights of the people; meaning the right of representation in the House of Commons. With this view, constitutional tracts were printed and distributed gratis at the

expense of the society. Essays and extracts from various authors, calculated to promote the same design, were published, in order to extend this knowledge through every part of the United Kingdom, and to convince men of rank that it was to their interest as well as their duty to support a free constitution and to maintain and assert those common rights which are essential to the dignity and happiness of the human race. To secure short parliaments, and a more equal representation of the people, were its primary objects.

These demands were perfectly legal and constitutional. A plan was agreed upon and drawn up by the Duke of Richmond, which appears to have received the approbation of the majority. It embraced annual parliaments and universal suffrage, in the broadest acceptation of the term. The duke exchanged opinions with Colonel Sharman, Chairman of the Committee of Correspondence, appointed by the volunteers in Lisburn. The English reformers sympathized with the Irish, and the two parties corresponded with each other on their respective courses of action. The duke's language was as follows: "From that quarter, the House of Commons, I have nothing to hope. It is from the people at large that I expect any good; and I am convinced that the only way to make them feel that they are really concerned in the business is to contend for their full, clear, and indisputable rights of universal representation. When the people are fairly and equally represented in Parliament, when they have annual opportunities of changing their deputies, and through them of controlling every abuse of government in a safe, easy way, there can be no longer occasion for recurring to those ever dangerous, though sometimes necessary expedients of armed force, which nothing but a bad government can justify."

When the county of Middlesex petitioned the King for a dissolution of Parliament and a change of ministers during the Wilkes excitement, most of the counties and eleven of the largest cities also convened meetings for the same subject. Foremost amongst them was the county of Yorkshire. On the 25th of November, 1779, Parliament met. All hope of recovering the revolted provinces of America was given up. The Marquis of Rockingham moved an amendment to the ministerial address, the

drift of which was that public ruin could only be averted "by new measures and new counsellors." He was supported by the Dukes of Grafton and Richmond, Lords Shelburne, Effingham, Camden, and other peers in opposition. The defence of the ministers was feeble, but a majority of two to one supported them.

About the end of this year, the large meeting of the freeholders of Yorkshire formed an association, and called a great meeting of the county, to consider a petition to Parliament for national economy, and in it they requested "that before any new burdens were laid upon the counties, effectual measures might be taken by that House to inquire into and correct the gross abuses in the expenditure of public money; to reduce all exorbitant emoluments; and to rescind and abolish all sinecure places and unmerited pensions of the State." Meetings were held, and petitions of a similar import were adopted by all the chief counties and towns. On the 8th of February, 1780, Sir George Savile presented that memorable petition of the county of York. It was so numerously signed, that it seemed not so much to cover as to bury the table of the House of Commons. In presenting it, Sir George said it had been moved at a meeting of six hundred gentlemen and upwards; that in the hall where it was voted, there was more property represented than in the House of Commons itself; and that the petition was signed by eight hundred freeholders. During the speech Savile was permitted to make in support of the petition, his slender figure seemed to expand, and his delicate form to gather strength from the magnitude of the interests confided to his charge; his brother members preserved an unbroken silence, giving him all the attention and respect due to a character so upright and unsullied. Sir George Savile was a model member, who, when most others were struggling for place or peerage, alone cared for neither. He entered Parliament in 1758, and for five-and-twenty years was the constant advocate of civil and religious liberty, never abandoning the struggle until his death.

Acting on the precedent set by the revolted colonies, committees of correspondence were named by the Yorkshire Association and sixty-one gentlemen, of whom fourteen were clergymen, were appointed to prepare a plan of operations to support reform and restore freedom of Parliament. This committee proposed the

shortening of parliaments, and the more equal representation of the people. The great Whig peers were present at the first meeting of the association held in York. They were convinced that the Parliament was corrupt, and that nothing but frequent elections and a reformed representation could purify the House. The peers approved of economical reform, which was the main object advanced at the first meeting; but when the Yorkshire committee proposed parliamentary reform and more equal representation, they grew frightened. They did not mind curbing the influence of the Crown, but did not wish to diminish the power of the aristocracy. The consequence was, that none of the peers, except Lord Effingham, attended the second meeting, knowing that parliamentary reform was a very different thing from economical reform. The great Whig borough proprietors also drew back, because they had no idea of lending their sanction to measures which would diminish their own power in the country. The association was not discouraged by the desertion of its noble friends, who, however, managed to check its action by introducing among its early proceedings a compromise, which created a large measure of dissatisfaction and greatly retarded operations. This was due to the Marquis of Rockingham, a nobleman more popular from his power of conciliating jarring elements than from any personal gifts. He promised his support and that of his noble friends, on condition that triennial instead of annual parliaments should be inserted in the programme of the society. The concession was granted, but had not the effect of conciliating the peers, who declined to follow the leadership of Lord Rockingham. In fact, the proposal was nothing more than a ruse, intended to sow dissension in the ranks of the party; for it was subsequently ascertained that none of the great lords looked favourably on the new movement.

On the 15th of February, Sir George Savile brought forward a motion "that there be laid before the House an account of all the dates of such patents or other instruments by which such places are held, the names of the persons who hold the same, and the salaries and fees belonging thereto." And also, "that there be laid before the House an account of all subsisting pensions granted by the Crown during pleasure or otherwise, specifying the

amount of such pensions respectively, and the time when, and the persons to whom, such pensions were granted." All these motions, of course, were rejected; but they paved the way for the plan of economical reform soon introduced by Mr. Burke, for which he was afterwards thanked by the Yorkshire Association.

At this time young Pitt entered the House, making his first speech in favour of Burke's motion. He attached himself to the Opposition in company with Shelburne, Townshend, Dunning, Barré, and Fox. When Pitt had finished his maiden speech, Fox, with generous warmth, hurried up to wish him joy of his success. As they were together, old General Grant passed by them, and said, "Ay, Mr. Fox, you are praising young Pitt for his speech; you may well do so, for, excepting yourself, there is no man in the House can make such another; and old as I am, I expect to hear you both battling within these walls, as I have heard your fathers before you." Mr. Fox, disconcerted at the awkward turn of the compliment, was silent, and looked foolish; but young Pitt, with delicacy and readiness, answered, "I have no doubt, General, you would like to attain the age of Methuselah."

Over seventy millions was spent on the American war, and the members for the close boroughs were the main strength on which the war party relied. Hence the cry against these boroughs rapidly arose. This cry was heartily espoused by the Rev. C. Wyvill, a Yorkshire clergyman, who became the backbone of the association. The activity of this man is seen in his voluminous correspondence, which extends from 1779 to 1784, and fills six volumes of close print. They contain all the proceedings connected with the association in York, and the correspondence which took place between himself and those who were interested in the reform of Parliament. Mr. Wyvill had the mortification to see one after another of his noble colleagues slacken in their zeal, and finally drop off, only a few remaining true to the cause. Among the few who were staunch was Sir George Savile, whose memorable resolution, above quoted, was intended to reduce the influence of the Crown, by regulating and limiting the expenditure of public money. Sir Charles Turner, more outspoken than others, said that he considered the House of Commons, as then constituted, like a parcel of thieves that had stolen an estate, and were afraid

of letting any person look into the title-deeds, through fear of losing it again.

On the 11th of February, 1780, Mr. Burke first introduced his famous plan for economical reform, the leading objects of which were to lessen public expenditure and diminish regal influence. He proposed a better regulation of the King's household, the sale of the Crown lands, and the abolition of the separate jurisdictions for Wales and the counties palatine. Violent conflicts followed, in which the Ministry were more than once left in a minority, and Mr. Burke's bill was lost on this occasion, and only finally carried in a subsequent session, when curtailed of its chief features. A motion by Colonel Barré in the lower House, and by Lord Shelburne in the upper, for the appointment of a committee to inspect the public accounts, met with more favour. The Ministry were thus forced to introduce a bill which passed into law for instituting a committee of accounts, giving some satisfaction.

It was on the 6th of April, 1780, that Mr. Dunning moved in committee of the whole House his celebrated resolution, "that the influence of the Crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished." This was carried by a majority of 233 votes against 215; but a second motion on the 26th instant to give effect to it, was lost by a majority of 177 to 134. Parliamentary business during the interval was interrupted by the illness of the Speaker, and the Ministry made such use of the interval, that Alderman Sawbridge declared that since the vote of the 6th instant, denouncing the growth of Crown influence, that power had been in a progressive state of increase.

On the 29th of May, about two months after the passing of this famous resolution, the City was brought to the brink of destruction by the Anti-Catholic riots of the Protestant Association. Lord George Gordon petitioned to repeal the law in favour of Catholics, and 20,000 persons accompanied the petitioner to the House; riots followed, the mob behaved shamefully, destroying a great amount of property; the prisoners of Newgate, Clerkenwell, and the Fleet were released. The town was in a state of siege. Thirty-six fires were seen blazing in one night. The military received orders to fire upon the rioters, without waiting for the sanction of the civil power, and about 458 persons were killed and wounded.

Under a warrant of the Secretaries of State, Lord George Gordon was committed to the Tower, on the charge of high treason. A reaction almost immediately followed. People became alarmed at the evidence of ignorance and violence which these riots had afforded. The Government, however, gained by the tumults ; for they strongly impressed the minds of the public with the danger arising from popular assemblies for political purposes. After these disturbances country associations for promoting reform, fell into discredit, and were deserted by many of their old friends.

Just then France, humbled to the dust by Chatham, united with Spain and Holland against England. India was in danger ; Ireland continued in a perturbed state ; for, by the convention of military delegates at Dungannon, she had assumed an attitude of defiance. In England, the authority of the Government had fallen to the lowest point. Advantage was taken of the prevailing apprehension to dissolve Parliament in September 1780, and at the general election which immediately followed, most of the members who advocated parliamentary reform were thrown out, although the demand for it among the people was as loud as it afterwards became in 1831. The unreformed constituencies, by failing to elect the members who truly represented this national cry, gave a practical proof of their own corruption and lack of sympathy with the wants and wishes of the country at large. Sir George Savile, in his address to the freeholders of York, told them in plain terms that there was no hope of arresting the progress of public calamity, "till the purity of the constituent, and thereby that of the representative," was restored. Several members of the late Parliament, tired out by constant attendance and fruitless opposition, refused to incur either the trouble or expense which a contest in such constituencies would involve.

Pitt next joined the reformers, and avowed himself the enemy of close boroughs. The first meeting for reform was held in the spring of 1780. The resolution for annual parliaments was signed by Fox, as chairman. On the 7th of May, 1782, during the Rockingham administration, Mr. Pitt introduced a motion for a committee to inquire into the representation. This was seconded by Alderman Sawbridge, and supported by Sir George Savile, but was lost by twenty votes. It was a great disappointment to the

small handful of Radicals, who had spared no effort to foster and encourage the attempt, but their hopes were still further crushed by the desertion of some of their most powerful friends. It was previous to 1783 that the meetings at the Thatched House Tavern were held. There were present at those gatherings, the Duke of Richmond, Major Cartwright, Horne Tooke, and, associated with them, Dr. Price, Jebb, and Sheridan ; men who, at the time, constituted the vanguard of Liberalism. On the strength of the resolutions agreed to, Mr. Pitt was induced to bring forward, for the second time, the subject of reform before the House. The motion was negatived by a majority of forty-four.

At this period General Conway moved an address, imploring the King to discontinue the war with America. The House divided after an interesting debate, when the ministers finding themselves in a minority of one, Lord North resigned. About the end of the month the new cabinet was completed, Lord Rockingham becoming Premier. Various measures of reform, which the opposition of the Ministry had defeated, were now successfully introduced, and became law. Among these were two bills ; one, prohibiting contractors from sitting in the House, and the other disabling revenue officers from voting at elections.

Mr. Burke introduced for the third time his bill for the reform of the Civil List establishments. By this bill many useless places and offices in the royal household were abolished, and the Crown was restrained from granting pensions exceeding £300 a year.

The revolt of the colonies, among other results, had the effect of drawing attention to the state of Ireland. In 1778 two Acts were passed ; one, admitting the Irish to a direct participation in colonial trade, and the other permitting the free importation of cotton yarn manufactured in Ireland into any British port. These just concessions excited prodigious alarm in the commercial and manufacturing districts of England, as they were likely to prove detrimental to British industry. London, however, was not influenced by such selfish considerations ; but from other towns, petitions and instructions to representatives were sent up, in support of which counsel and evidence were heard by the House ; and the Acts were only finally passed by the present abandonment of some of the provisions most favourable to Irish commerce.

Mr. Burke was the great advocate of Ireland on this occasion. These concessions of the English Parliament neither met the wants nor the wishes of Ireland; for the people, in 1782, denied the supremacy of the British Legislature and the right of the Privy Council under Poynings' Act to originate laws; they called for a Habeas Corpus Act, and the abolition of superfluous places and pensions. These claims being made by armed men, it was perilous to refuse them. A convention was held in Dungannon, where the representatives of one hundred and forty-three corps of volunteers assembled and passed resolutions declaring a fixed determination to see "a speedy and effectual" redress of grievances. "They knew," they said, "their duty to the sovereign, and were disposed to be loyal; but they knew also what they owed to themselves, and were resolved to be free."

On the 16th of April Mr. Grattan, in a speech of extraordinary eloquence, moved in the Commons of Ireland for a "Declaration of Rights" under the form of an address to the throne. Such was the power of his eloquence, that it passed both Houses, and was transmitted to England. On the 18th of May following, the subject was introduced into the English Parliament by Mr. Fox, and in this way the obnoxious Act for securing the dependence of Ireland was repealed.

On the 1st of July Lord Rockingham died, and the cabinet was broken up after a short but not inglorious ministry of thirteen weeks. The King immediately appointed Lord Shelburne as Lord Rockingham's successor, and he accepted the appointment without consulting his colleagues. This offended the Rockingham Whigs, who resigned, because Mr. Fox had been passed over. Nichols says that, from the death of Rockingham, the Whigs ceased to be a party, and became a faction, their efforts being no longer employed to obtain any public object except the possession of power. Pitt was Chancellor of the Exchequer in the new Shelburne cabinet.

On the 24th of February, petitions praying for more equal representation of the people in Parliament were presented by the Yorkshire freeholders, signed by 10,124 people, and petitions for the same object were presented from various parts of the country. These efforts of the constitutional party to bring the subject of

reform before the House of Commons, although unsuccessful, were the means of diffusing knowledge throughout the kingdom. Societies were formed in most of the large towns, including Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield, and Norwich, the last-named being able to boast of no less than twenty small organizations of a political character, which kept up an intimate correspondence with the central society in London. Differences of opinion, however, gradually led to the secession of some of the warmest friends of reform. Names known to us now as those of great ministers, were associated with the society for demanding short parliaments, until the bearers of those names were advanced to high office ; among the foremost were Fox, Norfolk, and the Duke of Richmond. Soon the zeal of these reformers slackened, and was finally lost in the reluctance of office.

In 1783 Mr. Pitt renewed his motion for reform in the representation, by proposing to add a hundred members to the counties, and abolishing a number of the smaller boroughs, but it was negatived by a larger number than on the preceding occasion. Jebb had prophesied this defeat. "The King," he said, "will not permit the smallest good to be done to the Constitution if he can help it." It was not till 1785 that the measure was again debated. Mr. Pitt, who stood pledged to the reformers "as a man and a minister," moved to bring his bill. His plan was to transfer the the right of election from thirty-six decayed boroughs to the counties and large unrepresented towns, allowing a pecuniary compensation to the owners of disenfranchised boroughs ; and to extend the right of voting in populous towns to the inhabitants in general. Mr. Fox strongly objected to purchasing the franchise of boroughs. "Government," he said, "was not a property, but a trust ; whatever was given for constitutional purposes should be resumed when those purposes were no longer answered." Cartwright maintained the same opinion, as seen in his address to the freeholders of Lincoln. "I have no foxhunter's vote for party or connection ; no, nor even for sacred friendship. To my friend I will give my purse, my hand, my heart ; but I will not give him that which is not mine. My vote I hold in trust ; it belongs to my country : my country alone shall have it." After a long debate, the motion was negatived by a majority of 248 to 174. So far Mr. Pitt redeemed

his engagement to the reformers. He has been accused of insincerity in the affair, and the accusation seems to be well founded. He certainly left the measure to its fate after having brought it forward. The following year the Yorkshire Association came to an end. Formed of heterogeneous elements without cohesion, and with half-hearted leaders, it is no wonder it failed. For six years it struggled without success ; but eventually, when the people angrily demanded the change, they attained their object. After 1786, the few who endeavoured to keep alive the agitation for reform, had harder work. Major Cartwright was one of those who never lost hope. Writing to his wife, he remarks, "I this day met my old friend Wilberforce in the street, who shook me very kindly by the hand. Among other friendly expressions, he said he hoped we should meet in a better world. I answered that I hoped we should first mend the world we were in."

In the reform agitation which preceded 1832, the demand for short parliaments was as loud as that for suffrage extension ; but when Lord John Russell introduced his Reform Bill, the repeal of the Septennial Act was left an open question. Neither the Reform Act itself nor the power of the press sufficed to quell the agitation for short parliaments. Down to the period of the People's Charter, it formed one of the famous six points. Since then, however, the further concessions of the franchise and the ballot have effaced the remembrance of the people's old grievance. Dr. Jebb, in his political papers, laid great stress on the importance of short parliaments. He showed that annual parliaments were the common usage of the country for nine hundred years. "The people's right of annually electing deputies to represent them was in the time of the Triennial Act as much part of their birthright as the freedom of their persons ; that they enjoyed it longer than Magna Charta without violation till the time of Charles I. ; that is was, therefore, no more in the power of a single king and parliament to deprive the people of their right than of Magna Charta ; and that the people have now a right at any time to resume their original power and elect only for one year."

The Triennial Act was introduced in the reign of William and Mary, and the Septennial, introduced by the Duke of Devonshire,

was passed in 1716. The objection to the latter was, that the representative is thereby enabled to form an interest separate from, or opposed to, that of his constituents. Junius said "that the last session of a septennial parliament employed itself in courting the favour of the people, that at this rate the representatives have six years for offence and but one for atonement." Adding, in his usual caustic manner, that "a death-bed repentance seldom reaches to restitution."

Two Acts were passed in the days of Edward III. ordering that a parliament should be holden once every year, and more if need be; the object then evidently being to prevent the Crown from acting without the Parliament. During the whole of that reign, and for the first eighteen years of the following one, writs were annually issued for new elections, till Richard II. made himself absolute. Annual parliaments are, therefore, according to the ancient Constitution of England and the birthright of Englishmen. The chief reason alleged for rejecting this demand for short parliaments was the notion of trying to check bribery. It was supposed that a seat for three years might tempt a man to accept a bribe; but a man who sits for one year is not liable to be tempted, unless he would risk all his future expectations. This, however, is no argument against short parliaments, for if they cannot restrain corrupt ministries, longer ones are not likely to do it. The right to elect is the prerogative of the people, and the more frequent opportunities they have of infusing fresh spirit into popular representation, the more perfect will that representation become. Hence it may be inferred that, regarding the House of Commons as a popular assembly, the Septennial Act was a retrograde step

CHAPTER VIII.

RADICAL LEADERS.

Major Cartwright—Early Life—A Brave Old Sea-dog—The Father of the Radical Party—Reforms in 1776—Definition of a Whig and Tory—Basis of Political Creed—Views upon Moderation—Cartwright denied Promotion—Proof against Stock Exchange Jobbery—Sympathy with Ireland—Pain and Priestley—Revolution Society Reorganized—First Year of the French Republic—Earl Stanhope—Richard Price—His Early Life—Price on Morals and Finance—Advocates American Revolution—Sinking Fund Scheme—Patriotic Sermon—French and English Radicals—Joseph Priestley—Early Struggles—Secretary to Lord Shelburne—Residence at Birmingham—Love of Controversy—Public Quarrel—Hatred of Establishment—Anecdote—Elected Member of French Academy—Reply to Burke—A Hot Dinner—The Inflammatory Handbill—Opposition Banquet—Riots—Birmingham Hell-cats—Sacrilege—Flight to London—Sails for America—His Character and Writings.

ONE of the most active characters during the above proceedings was Major Cartwright. He was known as the father of the Radical movement, by its friends, and his opponents did not scruple to describe him as the “drum-major of sedition.” He was a man of good birth, education, and fortune, endowed with fine and generous feelings, and of spotless morals in private as well as in public life. “A man,” Fox said, “whose enlightened mind and profound constitutional knowledge placed him in the highest ranks of public characters; and whose purity of principle and consistency of conduct through life commanded the most respectful attention to his opinions.” Cartwright was nephew of Viscount Tyrconnel, under whose roof he is supposed to have imbibed those liberal political principles from which he never swerved during a long life and varied career. At an early age he entered the Navy with excellent prospects. He was as brave as a lion; on one occasion he leaped from the deck of a seventy-four to

save the life of a brother officer, and never shirked either hardship or danger where his country was concerned. He was present at more than one naval encounter, acquitting himself with credit. In his letters to Lady Tyrconnel, he tells some stories of the heroes of his day, which show the character of the men with whom he mixed. "The admiral," he tells us, "sent round to all the captains of the fleet to inquire how they fared during the action. Patrick Baird, of the *Defiance*, having a finger shot off, returned the following message: "My compliments to the admiral, and tell him I have only lost a tobacco stopper." The same old sea-dog, being examined as witness on a court martial respecting the practicability of throwing succours into Gibraltar, was asked if he should have thought it his duty at all hazards to follow his instructions. "If an admiral," said he, "were ordered to throw succours into hell, in my opinion he ought to attempt it; and the old *Defiance* should be at his service to lead the van."

During the American war, Cartwright refused a good appointment, as he could not approve of the contest between England and the colonies. "It would be a desertion of my principles," said he, "were I to put myself in a situation that might probably cause me to act a hostile part against them."

Cartwright, as far as his own interest was concerned, was not a pushing man; if he could have found others willing to execute the work, he would have been satisfied with the office of prompter. He entertained a manly contempt for those lukewarm temporizing people whose maxim is to "swim with the stream." "This," he remarks, "is the doctrine of indolence and indifference; and, in dissipated and vicious times, is the doctrine, too, of idleness and vice. Luther, in his day, was treated as a visionary, a madman; but it is to Luther we owe our religious equality." Having left the Navy, Cartwright settled down as a country gentleman, and was honoured by a commission in the militia, taking the rank of major, by which title he was always afterwards known. He was thirty-seven years old when he adopted the rôle of reformer, and his circumstances raised him above the suspicion of being a disappointed or needy adventurer. He published his first pamphlet on American independence in the same year that Patrick Henry first broached the subject in America. Two years

after he began to see the corrupted state of parliamentary representation in England. In 1776 he first appeared as a Radical reformer, and, with the exception of Lord Stanhope, was one of the first writers in support of the movement. It was Cartwright who described the Tory of his day as one who believed in the Divine right of kings, and the Whig as believing in the Divine rights of noblemen and gentry. Horne Tooke entertained so high an opinion of him that he declared, "If England possessed half-a-dozen men of his character and firmness in the different counties, they would have put a stop to the American war." It was by the influence of this remarkable man that the Duke of Richmond was brought into the Constitutional Society. Cartwright happened to publish a pamphlet containing some severe strictures on the probity of the Government, and the duke, with the book in his pocket and the offensive passage turned down, called on the writer to remonstrate with him for the injustice of doubting the integrity of men before they were tried. This singular interview was the origin of their subsequent friendship. The duke finally became the chairman of the Constitutional Society, and his rank and character imparted a certain weight to the association which it never lost.

Among the works published by the society was a "Declaration of Rights" by Cartwright, which won the approval of the Earl of Chatham, and of which Sir William Jones said, "that it ought to have been written in letters of gold." The large-heartedness of the man is seen again, in his address to the freeholders of Middlesex, in which he argues with great force against the meanness and selfishness which would object to give privileges to others, because such concessions would narrow their own. "With regard to the common rights of nature," he says, "we are all equal; nor can we think it any degradation to ourselves to participate in the natural means of preservation and any of those blessings bestowed by our Creator equally and freely to all. Will the fountain be less grateful to our palate because it slakes the thirst of the poor and laborious part of mankind? Will the air we breathe be less refreshing and beneficial because it is enjoyed in common with the cottager? Nor should we conceive our rights and franchises in any way abridged, our dignity lessened,

or our liberty less dear to us, were every Englishman, from the prince to the peasant, to enjoy in common with ourselves the privilege of voting for a legislative guardian which is the birth-right of all."

The basis of Cartwright's political creed is nobly expressed in his contempt for the parrot phrase of selfish faction,—“a stake in the country.” On this theme he grew eloquent. “Though a man should have neither lands, nor gold, nor herds, nor flocks, yet he may have parents and kindred, he may possess a wife and offspring to be solicitous for. He hath also by birthright a property in the English Constitution, which, if not unworthy such a blessing, will be more dear to him than many acres of the soil without it. These are all great stakes to have at risk ; and we must have odd notions of justice if we do not allow that they give him an undoubted right to share in the choice of those trustees into whose keeping and protection they are to be committed.”

Cartwright answers many questions which even in our own day rise to the lips. “As to the general observation whether it is right for me or any other man to stand forward in the cause, we must decide whether it be or not the will of God that truth and justice should prevail. Temper in conduct is right, but moderation in principle is being unprincipled ; moderation in practice may be commendable, but moderation in principle is detestable. Can we trust a man who is moderately honest, or esteem a woman who is moderately virtuous ?” “Don't tell me of a moderate man,” said Jebb, with indignation ; “he is always a rascal.” Nothing pained Cartwright more than an indifference to politics. “The man who would say, ‘I have nothing to do with politics,’ according to my conception it would be as laudable as to say, ‘I have nothing to do with morality.’”

A man of this honest cast of mind was not likely to find a comfortable niche in the framework of a society where “time-servers” were in the ascendant. It is not surprising that the frankness of his political opinions caused him to be passed over and finally superseded, while major of the Nottinghamshire Militia, by the Duke of Newcastle. This glaring act of injustice so incensed Cartwright's brother officers, that several withdrew in disgust after resigning their commissions.

One incident in the life of this remarkable man speaks volumes for his uprightness. A gentleman of position, connected with the principal leaders of the American cause, wishing to do Cartwright a service, revealed the secret that France had just signed a treaty with his country ; that it would be some hours before the English ambassadors could be informed of the fact ; thus purposely affording him an opportunity of making an advantageous speculation on the Stock Exchange. Cartwright scorned to avail himself of the advantage. "In transactions between man and man there should be equality of information. If I am possessed of a secret which another has no possible means of obtaining, we are not on equal terms, and every advantage I gain in consequence of such a secret is in my opinion a fraudulent transaction."

It is hardly possible that a man of this disposition would seek to stir up a revolution in his country, that he might profit by a scramble for the property of the rich. This is the constant and frequently repeated motive put forward by Tory opponents to account for the zeal exhibited by Radical reformers.

Cartwright was fifty years in advance of his time ; an example of this was afforded by his sympathy with Ireland ; that unfortunate country, whose frank, impetuous, free-hearted people has ever been and ever will be an insoluble riddle to every Œdipus in Downing Street, from the simplest of reasons—want of sympathy with the Irish character. "In my judgment," said Cartwright, "no nation had ever a juster cause for resistance to oppression than the Irish." He corresponded with Colonel Sharman, the leading patriot of the day. Under the public-spirited Lord Charlemont, Ireland enjoyed a transient gleam of sunshine, and a delusive hope of amelioration in her condition. It was Sharman to whom the Duke of Richmond addressed his celebrated letter, which ultimately became the basis of the London Corresponding Society.

While Cartwright and Tooke were steadily aiming at a legitimate and moderate reform, more ardent and advanced Radicals came into the ranks. Thomas Paine and Joseph Priestley were amongst the most prominent. The former tried to show that monarchy and aristocracy are incompatible with the rights of the people, and that religion was open to the same objection. These ardent reformers operated by means of a Society called the "Revolution

Society," which was originally an old connection formed of dissenters in 1688; but it was now reorganized by Paine and Priestley for the purposes of modern revolutionists, by the admirers of French liberty in this country. The society met at the London Tavern on the 4th of November, the first year of the French Republic; celebrating its first anniversary with more than usual solemnity; the members imagined that the French Revolution would bear comparison with that which hurled James II. from the throne. The president on this occasion was Earl Stanhope, whose love of republican principles was carried almost to insanity. This eccentric nobleman chose to prove his sincere love for the principles of equality and fraternity by giving his daughter in marriage to an apothecary in Long Acre who was secretary to one of the political societies, and went by the name of "Liberty Hall."

Among the members of the society was Dr. Richard Price, the distinguished political writer, mathematician, and reformer. He was born in 1723, and was the son of a Calvinistic Welsh clergyman. The quality of his mind may be inferred from his taking an enthusiastic interest in "Butler's Analogy" during boyhood; a work which never ceased to be the subject of his praise and admiration. For thirteen years he filled the post of domestic chaplain to Mr. Streatfield, at Stoke Newington, during which time he officiated both at Edmonton, Newington Green, and Old Jewry. His patron left him some property at his death. Price owing to want of success in the pulpit, was induced to publish dissertations, which attracted universal attention, and elicited warm admiration from the Earl of Shelburne, the Duke de Rochefoucault, Dr. Franklin, and the celebrated Turgot.

His first treatise, "On the Foundation of Morals," published in 1758, was an able attack on the doctrines of Hume. Further dissertations of a religious character procured him the degree of Doctor of Divinity from one of the Scotch universities. In 1771 he published his "Observations on Reversionary Payments; on schemes for providing annuities for widows and persons in old age;" on the method of calculating the values of assurances on lives; "on the National Debt;" and others of a like nature. The work on life assurance was an exposure of the inadequacy of societies of this kind which were continually being

founded in London and other parts of the kingdom. This publication became so popular that it reached a fourth edition. In 1776 Price wrote on the policy and justice of the war with America, exposing the injurious course of action pursued by this country towards the colonies; the work reached eight editions, and procured the author an invitation from Congress to live in America, which he declined. This book won the esteem of Franklin and the enmity of Burke. Among the many who complimented him on its success was the Duke of Cumberland, who said, "I sat up to read it so late last night that it almost blinded me." "On the greater part of the nation," observed Dunning, who was standing by, "it had exactly the opposite effect; it has opened their eyes."

When Lord Shelburne became Prime Minister, he consulted Price on the formation of a scheme for discharging the National Debt, which was introduced to the House of Lords, but abandoned on change of ministry. An account of it was published by Dr. Price in 1783 in a treatise entitled "The State of the Public Debt." He published some marvellous speculations on the augmentation of money by compound interest, in which he showed that a penny invested at five per cent. would in 1,773 years amount to an inconceivable sum. This extravagant and paradoxical scheme influenced the measures of Pitt, and for a time satisfied the nation. Pitt consulted Price upon the subject of the National Debt; and out of three plans which he submitted for its reduction, the minister adopted that which formed the foundation of the measure establishing a Sinking Fund in 1786, though no acknowledgment was made of its origin. Some of the doctor's theories were erroneous, but in other respects his works were regarded with admiration, and created much controversy. On the evening of the banquet of the Revolution Society, Dr. Price preached in a dissenting chapel in the Old Jewry, before the members of the society, a sermon on "The Love of our Country," which was subsequently printed extensively, and was the cause of considerable agitation. In this discourse, Price accepted the French Revolution as a glorious event in the history of mankind, and as one fraught with good to the whole human family. "What an eventful period is this," said he; "I am thankful I have lived to see it; I could almost say, 'Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.' I have lived to see a diffusion

of knowledge, which has undermined superstition and error ; I have lived to see thirty millions of people indignantly and resolutely spurning at slavery, and demanding liberty with an irresistible voice ; their king led in triumph, and an arbitrary monarch surrendering himself to his subjects. After sharing in the benefits of one revolution, I have been spared to be a witness to two others, both glorious ; and now methinks I see the ardour for liberty catching and spreading. A general amendment beginning in human affairs—the dominion of kings changed for a dominion of law, and the dominion of priests giving way to reason and conscience. Be encouraged, all ye friends of freedom and writers in its defence ! The times are auspicious ; your labours have not been in vain. Behold kingdoms, admonished by you, starting from sleep, breaking their fetters and claiming justice from oppressors. After setting America free, behold the light you have struck out, reflected in France, and then kindled into a blaze that lays despotism in ashes, and warms and illuminates Europe.”

The sentiments of this discourse were gaining ground at that moment in England. At a meeting of the “*Revolution Society*,” a motion proposed by Dr. Price was agreed to by acclamation for a formal address of their “*congratulations to the National Assembly on the event of the late glorious revolution in France*.”

A close correspondence was soon established between the discontented party in this country and the democrats in Paris, the result being that several political societies were formed. Price endeavoured to show that the revolution of 1688 was intended to establish the right of the people to choose their rulers, to retain them only during good-behaviour, and to change the government at their pleasure. As a political and moral philosopher, Dr. Price must ever rank among the most candid and perspicuous, as well as the most distinguished of his day. In private life his character was marked by an affability and simplicity which formed a great contrast to the noisy controversial writers with whom he generally co-operated. He suffered himself to be interrupted at all hours by any who required his assistance or advice, and devoted a fifth part of his annual income to charitable purposes. He was short in stature, slender in figure, and inclined to stoop ; his face gave the impression of frankness and rectitude of purpose.

His wife, who, for a long time before her death was a confirmed invalid, found hardly any enjoyment except in a game of whist ; and though the doctor disliked cards, and never would touch them on any other occasion, yet to amuse her he would sit down every evening to a card-table, and play till it was late, with a cheerfulness and good-humour which charmed every one present.

Another dissenting minister who took a most active part in the Revolution Society was Dr. Priestley, who adopted the same line as Price, and carried on a fierce controversy, not only in the press, but from the pulpit. Joseph Priestley was born in 1733, and was the son of humble parents residing near Leeds. He was indebted to his aunt for the desultory education he received. Her house was the resort of dissenting ministers of every shade of opinion where the heterodox were made as welcome as the orthodox. At a very early age he became accustomed to discussions on such questions as free-will, foreknowledge, fate, liberty, necessity, and the sleep of the soul. Priestley tells us, "I saw reason to embrace the heterodox side of almost every question." At Nantwich he had a school of thirty boys, with a separate room for a dozen girls. Here he gave instruction from seven in the morning till four in the afternoon, and after that went to the house of an attorney, where he taught for three hours.

The first slice of good luck which fell to him was an appointment as private secretary to the Earl of Shelburne, at a salary of £250 a year, with a house and the prospect of a pension of £150. He was treated with great kindness by this nobleman, and enjoyed many social advantages beneath his roof. The engagement lasted for seven years ; after that we find Priestley in charge of a dissenting congregation at Birmingham, which position he held for the same number of years. It was while here that his political sympathies became developed.

He was a born controversialist, and contended not only with dignitaries, but also with Gibbon and his friend Dr. Price ; the latter he considered too moderate in his opinions. Walpole said Priestley wanted a papal power, and certainly no pope of Rome could have been more contemptuous of other faiths that differed from his own. He regarded all civil establishments of Christianity

as abuses. His own faith was constantly in a fluid condition ; his belief in the cardinal dogmas of Christianity becoming weaker as he grew older. One of his works is called the "History of the Corruptions of Christianity." In this he treated all Churches as associations of selfishness. Like Price, he exalted the French Revolution, and his admiration was not abated by the excesses of that movement. At the time when the excitement was at its height he published his "Familiar Letters," to refute some charges advanced against the dissenters. The ironical style of his composition gave great offence to the loyal and orthodox, and made him very unpopular with the Birmingham people. It seemed that some of Priestley's friends wanted to get his controversial works admitted into the public library of the town, and the orthodox party loudly protested against this, which trivial circumstance occasioned a considerable amount of ill-feeling. The animosity became keener by the active part Priestley and his friends had taken in petitioning Parliament for a repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. Priestley complained that the clergy of the Established Church refused to walk in funeral processions with dissenting ministers. An amusing illustration of this is given. "At the funeral of Mr. Gisborne, a dissenter, the Rev. Mr. Dovey, a churchman, refused to walk in procession with Mr. Bourne, a dissenting minister. The latter gentleman was a man of activity and spirit. The following pleasant circumstance happened : "Mr. Dovey, meeting the corpse, and finding Mr. Bourne walking before it, directed him to walk behind. Mr. Bourne declined to comply with this order, whereupon Mr. Dovey tried to outwalk him ; but Mr. Bourne, being as active as the churchman, kept up with him, till the rector, quickening his pace, they both fairly ran for it till they got to the church door. Mr. Dovey was so offended, that after the funeral, his pride getting the better of every consideration, he sent back the hat band and scarf, and even the pins that had been used on the occasion."

Priestley carried on an earnest correspondence with several distinguished literary men in France, who were prominent among the revolutionists ; and such was their estimate of him that he was unanimously elected a member of the French Academy—an honour of which he was justly proud. This distinction, however,

only tended to increase his unpopularity among the people of Birmingham, who viewed with distrust his sympathy for the new republic. Burke, in his "Reflections on the French Revolution," made some severe comments on the conduct and opinions of Dr. Price, a little before his death. Priestley defended his friend, and replied to Burke in the same tone; and while professing a regard for the English Constitution, applauded what was being done in France. "Mankind," he said, "was everywhere opening their eyes to the nature and use of government, and consequently the whole feudal system was tottering to its foundation." The tone of his criticism inflamed the Birmingham mind, already predisposed to detest his principles, and aroused all the worst passions of the Church and King party.

It was at this particular juncture that a number of Priestley's friends resolved to celebrate the 14th of July, the anniversary of the taking of the Bastille. A few days before the banquet, an inflammatory handbill was circulated through the town, which excited the Church and King party to actual frenzy. Among other matters it intimated that every enemy to civil and religious despotism would give his sanction to a public celebration of the French anniversary. "Extinguish the mean prejudices of nations," it went on to say, "and let your numbers be collected and sent as a free-will offering to the National Assembly. But is it possible to forget that your own Parliament is venal; your ministers hypocritical; your clergy legal oppressors? the reigning family extravagant? the crown of a certain great personage becoming every day too heavy for the head that wears it, too weighty for the people who gave it? your taxes partial and excessive? your representation a cruel insult upon the sacred rights of property, religion, and freedom? But on the 14th of this month, prove to the political sycophants of the day that you reverence the olive branch; that you will sacrifice to public tranquillity, until the majority shall exclaim, 'The peace of slavery is worse than the war of freedom.' Of that moment let tyrants beware!"

The people of Birmingham believed that this paper proceeded from the dissenters and republicans who had appointed the feast at the tavern on the 14th; but Priestley and his party affirmed that it had been written and distributed by some of the bigots of

the Church and King party, to make mischief and interrupt the celebration. From whatever source it originated, it proved a very serious affair, and occasioned much loss of life and property.

On the appointed day, about eighty persons met to commemorate the French Revolution, while at the same time, at an adjacent tavern, the magistrates of the town, with a number of the Church and State inhabitants, also assembled to drink long life to the King and Constitution. Priestley did not attend the banquet. Perceiving the excited state of public feeling, some were disposed to postpone the commemoration till a quieter season; but the tavern keeper, whose viands would not keep in that hot July, told them that he had prepared the dinner, and that they might eat it without danger, provided that they would disperse at an early hour. As the company assembled, they were hissed and hooted by some ragged boys, who shouted, "Church and King?" The reformers had procured three figures to be set on the table; one, a medallion of the King encircled in glory; another, an emblematic figure of British liberty; and a third representing Gallic slavery breaking its chains. A spy of the loyal mob, who had obtained admittance into the room, reported in the street that the revolutionists had cut off the head of the King and placed it on the table. The toasts said to have been drunk began with "The King and the Constitution," and "The National Assembly of France, whose virtue and wisdom have rescued twenty-six millions from the meanest condition of despotism to the dignity and happiness of freemen." But out of doors it was rumoured that the first toast was "Destruction to the British Government, and the King's head on a charger." This report at once excited patriotic feelings of vengeance. The mob rushed towards the tavern, broke the windows and doors, pelted and scattered the guests, shouting and screaming for Priestley, as they said, "to knock the powder out of his wig." The ultra-loyal magistrates, who were dining at the "Swan," inspired the mob to fresh vigour, by waving their hats from the window; those who were sufficiently sober shouting, "Church and King!" At nine o'clock in the evening, artisans and other working men joined in the loyal demonstration, and in a short time Dadsley's tavern was made a perfect wreck. They next visited the chapel

where Priestley preached, and demolished the building. After a similar visit to several dissenting chapels, the rabble marched in a body to Priestley's private residence at Fair-hill, about a mile and a half outside the town. The doctor and his family had fled; but his house, the whole of his library, and valuable apparatus for philosophical experiments, together with MSS. and notes on which he placed a high value, and all the furniture, were destroyed. This wound up the commemoration of the 14th of July. Next day the people of the town, joined by the miners, and amazon nail-makers of Walsall and all the district where women work at the anvil, renewed their destruction to the tune of "Church and King!" Several houses were sacked and plundered, and a great loss of property followed. Under the cloak of loyalty, private malice towards individuals was exhibited. One gentleman in the mob called out, "If you will pull down Mr. Hutton's house, I will give you two guineas to drink, for it was owing to him that I lost a cause in the court." The mob took him at his word, and dragged him into the nearest public-house, where he promised them what they pleased if they would not injure him. In half an hour those fast-drinking hell-cats ran up a score of three hundred and twenty-nine gallons of ale! The most active of the incendiaries were the women, who went about with lighted faggots, swearing that they would not do their work by halves. Thus the town for several days was in the hands of the mob, and the riot at length was only put down by the military. The action of the magistrates and the cowardice of the Government in not taking prompt measures to suppress the tumult merited the severest censure.

Priestley reached London safely, and shortly after took charge of Dr. Price's congregation at Hackney, where he resided till 1794, when he sailed for America. The liberality of numerous friends made up for his losses. He also recovered by law, compensation for damages, to the amount of £3,098. Letters of sympathy and addresses from various Jacobin societies in France poured in upon him without number; one was written by Condorcet, at that time Secretary to the French Academy. Priestley in return lost no opportunity of contrasting the toleration and happiness of France with the bigotry and misery of England

In the meantime, the Church zealots never ceased to abuse and blacken his reputation. They accused him of atheism ; of having declared that he would never rest until he had pulled down that impostor Jesus Christ, even as his friends, the philosophers in France, had done. "Dr. Priestley," said one, "at present seems a chaos in miniature, not worth God's notice, and has neither belief nor understanding given him. For a careful analysis proves his spirit of the order of rebel angels, his principles frothy and fiery, like fixed and inflammable air mixed with gunpowder, his body a *terra damnata*, and the whole compound a devil incarnate."

The revolutionists were everywhere abused in the streets of Birmingham and Warwick ; nor was flaming Toryism confined to the town where buckles and buttons were made, for it spread through the country. The favourite toast of the Church and King party was, referring to the Birmingham riots, "May every revolutionary dinner be followed by a hot supper!" After Priestley became principal of the Hackney Dissenting College, he plunged into a fierce controversy with Bishop Horsley and the clergy of the Establishment. His sympathy with the French Republic caused him to be treated with such suspicion and coldness that he was eventually driven to seek a home in America, where in 1804 he died. Priestley's character was kindly, notwithstanding his controversial tendencies ; his sincerity and fearless honesty won the respect of all who knew him, both in France, England, and America. He did good service to the world by his discoveries.* A collected edition of his works fills forty-five closely-printed volumes on every imaginable topic. He writes on the theory of language, on oratory, history, politics, biography, philosophy, religion, and music. Treating of the last subject, he recommends those who have no ear to practise, for the excellent reason that they may not be annoyed by their own bad music. He was the real discoverer of oxygen. Lavoisier claimed the credit of this ; but it was found, on comparison of dates, that Priestley was twelve

* I am largely indebted to Mr. Hitchman for this information. His "18th Century Studies," though written from a Tory point of view, contain an accurate and careful report of Priestley's works, most of which have become obsolete. Mr. Hitchman has preserved what is worth knowing, and his book is one which deserves the careful perusal of every political student.

months in advance of the Frenchman. Modern science is also indebted to Priestley for the discovery that the absorption of oxygen into the lungs in the process of respiration gives the colour to arterial blood. He also discovered the gases of muriatic, of sulphuric, and of fluoric acids, and nitrous oxide of gas. Speaking of his studies in natural philosophy, Brougham remarks that he was "an admirable observer in matters of experiment, but a superficial and inaccurate reasoner." The *Edinburgh Review* says, "He has written more on a greater variety of subjects than any other English author." Priestley, like Auguste Comte and a few other great men, was deficient in self-respect. He had no reluctance in accepting from friends the means of support; perhaps he felt he was working for the general good of mankind, and while doing so considered that the world was bound to minister to his necessities. It is creditable to human nature to find that fifteen friends testified their regard by subscribing regularly for his maintenance for several years. In society, Priestley was frank in manner, affable, and unassuming, never attempting to take the lead in conversation, but always willing to accommodate himself to the tastes and wishes of others. Brougham says, "He is of all voluminous writers the one who has the fewest readers."

CHAPTER IX.

LORD THURLOW.

The Constitutional Society—Lexington Libel—*Ex-Officio* Informations—Horne in Prison—Diversions of Purley—Refused Admission to the Bar—Edward Thurlow—A Debating Society—The First Brief—Advancement—A Brave Speech—How Thurlow received the Deputation—The Prince's Dinner—Pitt's Dislike of the Chancellor—Advice to a Parent—Dismissal—The Opinion of Lavater—Story of Lord Norfolk's Owl Keeper—Filial Respect—Miss Hervey—Morality of the Judges—Lord Thurlow's Daughter—A Strange Will—Love of Novels—Anecdote of the Lord Advocate of Scotland—Thurlow's Valet—Death of the King's favourite Judge.

AFTER the dissolution of the Association for the Support of the Bill of Rights, Cartwright, Jebb, and Horne started another Liberal association under the name of a "Society for Constitutional Information." Horne determined that this should serve as an engine to express fully and energetically the detestation of himself, his friends, and, if possible, of the whole nation, for the measures adopted by the Government for subjugating the refractory colonies.

On the breaking out of the first hostilities between Great Britain and America, Horne moved at a special meeting held at the King's Arms Tavern, in Cornhill, June 7th, 1775, that a subscription be raised "for the widows and children of our American fellow-subjects, who had been murdered at Lexington and Concord by the King's soldiers on April 19th, 1775." The motion being put and carried, the sum of £100 was agreed to be advanced out of the stock purse; Horne signed the resolution, after which it was immediately transmitted to several newspapers for insertion. The Government resolved to treat this as a seditious libel, and Thurlow, then Attorney-General, was directed to prosecute him and three newspaper proprietors who had

printed the resolution. The trial came on before Mansfield on the 4th of July, 1777, at Guildhall, just two years after the offence was committed. Horne, in the course of his ingenious defence, twitted the judge and the Attorney-General, treating each with a degree of unexampled severity. He complained that his lordship was assuming the duty of Attorney-General; the judge replied that if he thought he was doing him an injustice he had his remedy by a subsequent appeal to a higher court, who would set aside any verdict obtained irregularly. Mr. Horne warmly replied, and said, "Oh, my lord, let me not hear of remedies of your lordship's pointing out! that poison is the most baneful of all which poisons the physic. Your lordship's remedies are worse than the diseases of the patients who apply them; and it is but a poor satisfaction for a man who receives a wound to receive a plaster from the same hand. At Guildhall your lordship talked to me of a remedy; I submitted and tried it. It is true I set aside the verdict, but it cost me £200. The verdict was but £400, and the remedy cost half as much; it was, therefore, a pretty dear remedy." In the course of his defence Horne made other severe comments on the information filed against him by His Majesty's Attorney-General. "It is called an information *ex officio*—a very gentle expression for a harsh thing; for if you examine the real force and consequence of the term, as here applied, you will find it to contain anything that can be imagined illegal, unjust, wicked, and oppressive. *Ex officio*, gentlemen, means a power to dispense with all the forms and proceedings of the Courts of Justice, with all the wise provisions which our laws have taken to prevent the innocent from being oppressed by exorbitant and unjust power. An information means no more than an accusation, and by this means the Attorney-General is enabled, contrary to the laws of the land, to accuse whom he pleases, and of what he pleases, and when he pleases. And (if he pleases) he only accuses and never brings them to trial; he goes on harassing the subject with information upon information, if he pleases, and never brings that man to trial. If, however, out of his mercy or out of his resentment, he does choose at last to bring him to trial, why, gentlemen, he generally tries it by whom he pleases; nay, if he sees some reason to suspect that the verdict is likely to

go against him, he claims a right to stop if he pleases, without any decision, by withdrawing a juror. And if he loses the verdict, he pays no costs. But that is not all; for, if he has convicted six, seven, or eight men for the same offence, he exercises the sovereign power of pardon; he calls to judgment which of them he pleases, and lets such go as he pleases." Horne, notwithstanding his able defence, was convicted, fined £200, imprisoned for a year, and constrained to find securities for three years. Never was there a more unjust sentence or a more unrighteous verdict. In 1778 he appealed by writs of error, and employed his friend Dunning as counsel. His appeal, however, was in vain.

In consequence of the sentence pronounced upon him, Mr. Horne soon experienced what prison life was like. The Fleet and the King's Bench prison were two of the most remarkable institutions of that day. Persons were committed to the former who had incurred the displeasure of the Star Chamber. In the sixteenth year of Charles I.'s reign, when that court was abolished, it became a debtors' prison for persons charged with contempt of the Courts of Chancery, Exchequer, and Common Pleas. The King's Bench was in King Street, near St. George's-in-the-Fields, a damp, unhealthy place, situated in a marsh, the basement story several feet below the level of the Thames. These wretched prisons were always haunted by a disease called gaol fever, caused by want of fresh air and cleanliness. The prisoners who could not pay exorbitant sums for everything, were crowded in close rooms for fourteen or fifteen hours out of the twenty-four, even the luxury of a straw bed on a damp floor was not allowed to all; some slept in their clothes on benches projecting from the walls, and those to whom straw was allowed, could not get it changed till worn to dust. All sorts of prisoners were sometimes huddled together—debtors, felons, men and women, young and old offenders. The gaol fever was so prevalent that the judges complained of the prisoners brought into court as communicating the infection to the public; and the number who died annually exceeded the number executed. Some of the prisons had no sewers, the windows were stopped up to evade the window tax, which the gaolers had to pay. Every one committed had to pay

entrance money, and various fines to the turnkey. The very poorest had to pay one shilling and threepence a week for an unfurnished room. Often the number of prisoners exceeded the accommodation. When a room became vacant, it was allotted to the prisoner first in succession on the list who paid his entrance fine and garnish, or footing money; this was partly spent in drink, and partly for the use of the house. If no room were vacant, a new-comer had to hire of some tenant a part of his. In several apartments, four lay in two beds in those damp, dark cellars, each paying three shillings and sixpence a week for lodging money. The prisoners who could swear in court before a commissioner that they were not worth £5, and could not subsist without charity, had donations sent to the prison, and received their portion from the begging-box.

When Horne was paraded in the King's Bench, the tipstaves left without condescending to give him any information as to the prison accommodation. A Jew presently, on seeing his distress, offered to accommodate him for a small sum of money. It was soon discovered that this crafty Israelite had only part of a room himself, and his companions, with a fine sense of justice, and perhaps with a vague feeling of expectation, made him disgorge the sum, whereupon Horne ordered it to be distributed among them. When the gaoler found that he could pay, he was soon accommodated, and even his comforts were attended to. His suffering during his imprisonment partook of none of the severity which others had to endure, save the confinement, which permanently injured his health; his friends, however, were permitted to see him, and much time was given to study. It was from the King's Bench prison that Horne wrote the letter to Mr. Dunning, dated April 1778, which formed the basis of his subsequent work, the "*Diversions of Purley*." Mr. Dunning was his old student friend, and afterwards became Lord Ashburton. When the time of his sentence had expired, Mr. Horne paid his fine, found sureties for his good-behaviour, and was once more free. The expenses of three trials and of his imprisonment greatly diminished his fortune, but the proceeds resulting from the sale of his living, with some bequests from his father, furnished him with the slender means of existence. Immediately on his recovery of health,

he determined to fulfil the promises made to his friends. He had already kept the necessary number of terms, and nothing now remained but to pay his fees to the treasurer of the Inner Temple, and get called to the Bar. Several eminent attorneys promised briefs, and a fair opening lay before him. On applying for a call, the benchers affected to demur, and withheld their assent, stating their doubts as to his eligibility. They could urge nothing against his character, talents, or education. Mr. Horne was rejected, however, because it was doubtful, notwithstanding the resignation of his benefice, whether he was not still a clergyman. The first and second applications were resisted by a majority of the benchers of the Inner Temple. Their refusal was no doubt owing to the jealousy of some of the practising lawyers, who were afraid of admitting to their ranks a man of Horne's talent and combative character. This disappointment, added to failing health and loss of property, was a cruel blow, and not a little soured and embittered the remaining portion of his life. Rightly or wrongly, he attributed his repulse to the Lord Chief Justice, who had more than once shown the strongest antipathy towards Horne. He, however, was not cast down. There was more fight in this indomitable leader, and he was determined to prove it; no rebuffs, nor the humble rank of society in which he was condemned to continue, could check or repress the tone in which he assumed to be the censor of those who held a high position in the nation. Perhaps it is rare to find a man without fortune, station, or connections maintain so firm a front against overwhelming odds, as this obscure parson of New Brentford, who flung himself into the public cause, though every move he made was detrimental to his temporal interests and received no applause from the multitude. He was cheered only by the countenance of a few trusty friends, who stood by him to the last, believing in his honesty, and never deserting him in his worst calamities.

Edward Thurlow was the son of a poor clergyman in Suffolk. As a boy he was idle, insolent, and sullen; qualities which clung to him as a man. He received as good an education as most lads of his time. He was sent to Cambridge where his habits were so dissolute and irregular that he only escaped rustication by being

allowed to remove his name from the books, and in consequence never obtained a degree. After leaving college, he repaired to London to begin his legal studies; haughty and churlish, overbearing and insolent, he appeared calculated to shine neither in dissipation nor in study. In 1758 he was called to the Bar, and underwent the usual ordeal of obscurity and indigence. The history of his early life would be merely a recapitulation of the ordinary instances of pecuniary difficulties and unwearied assiduity which form the frequent introduction to the biography of celebrated lawyers. To what influence Thurlow owed his promotion is uncertain; various conjectures are hazarded, of which the most likely shall be related. For society, the young men of his day used to resort to Nando's Coffee-rooms, near Temple Bar, where they expected to meet a particular set of acquaintances; but, of course, the place was open to all who chose to enter and join in the conversation, at the risk, however, of meeting some mortifying rebuff. Here Thurlow swaggered and talked loudly of new plays, politics, and actresses, and took a prominent part in the gladiatorial discussions, knowing that he excelled in them, and pleased and excited when he found a large body of good listeners. One night a Bar acquaintance strongly espousing the judgment which had been lately passed against the supposed heir of the house of Douglas, the leading topic of the day, Thurlow took the opposite side. He made an able speech, showing very accurate knowledge of the whole proceedings, and having finished his argument and his punch, withdrew to his chambers, pleased with the victory which he had obtained over his antagonist, who was no match for him in dialectics. Thurlow that night went to bed, thinking no more of the Douglas case, and ready, according to the vicissitudes of argument, to support the opposite side with equal zeal. But it so happened that two Scotch law-agents had been present at Nando's, and had, at a side table, been quiet listeners to the noisy disputation. They were amazingly struck with the knowledge of the case and the acuteness which Thurlow had exhibited, and the moment he was gone, inquired who he was. They had never heard his name before; but finding he was a barrister, they resolved to retain him as junior in the case in which he showed such intelligence. Next morning a retainer in "*Douglas v. Duke of Hamilton*"

was left at his chambers, with a pile of papers, having a fee indorsed upon them ten times as large as he had ever before received. He greatly distinguished himself at this trial, and it may be considered the foundation of his fortune; for through it he made the acquaintance of the Duchess of Queensberry, who afterwards introduced him to Lord Bute and the King. From that time his success was assured. Thurlow was a Tory by natural disposition; a man whose originally narrow mind had never been enlarged by the acquisition of general knowledge, or even by any profound study of his own profession, and who attempted to cover his deficiencies by a haughty assurance and overbearing demeanour. He possessed a bigotry upon which all argument fell pointless, an obstinacy which no reason could shake, and an intrepidity of assertion which was either ludicrous from his ignorance or astounding from his audacity. His eloquence was of the turbulent order, which sought rather to overbear opposition than to convince; to silence rather than to confute. The sturdy boldness with which he spoke, and the uncompromising position which he always assumed, obtained for him, with the multitude, and perhaps with the King, a reputation for honesty of purpose which his conduct shows he did not possess. Although ever opposed to the popular sentiment, he was not personally unpopular; the people could not believe that a man so coarse in habits and so rude in manner could be a parasite or a courtier. Thurlow, when he became a judge, employed the aid of laborious helpers,—Kenyon and Hargrave,—who did the work for which the great man received the credit. This assistance was well rewarded; for long after he became Lord Chancellor he gratefully conferred on his “devil,” Kenyon, the chief justiceship of Chester, and did not stop even at that. Ingratitude was not one of the sins to be laid at his door. In 1771 he was elected member of the House of Commons, and made Attorney-General. After which he spoke strongly in favour of allowing to that officer the power to file informations *ex officio*. In opposing a motion for a committee to inquire into the administration of criminal justice, he not only proposed a severe censure upon the mover, but plainly intimated an opinion that trial by jury should be abolished in all cases of libel, and that the liberty of the press should be in the

exclusive guardianship of a judge appointed by the Crown. "If," said he, "we allow every pitiful patriot thus to insult us with ridiculous accusations, without making him pay forfeit for his temerity, we shall be eternally pestered with the humming and buzzing of those stingless wasps. Though they cannot wound or poison, they can tease and vex. I hope we shall now handle them so roughly as to make this the last of such audacious attempts." During the whole of his time in the House of Commons, he gave an unflinching support to the Ministry, and by the boldness of his assertions, and the audacity of his language, more than by the force of his reasoning, was considered Lord North's ablest coadjutor. On the question of the law of libel which then agitated the public mind, he treated contemptuously those by whom alterations in the direction of amelioration were pressed; and in all the debates relative to America, asserted the right of England to tax that country, and stigmatized those who resisted, as traitors and rebels; scorning the very notion of concession or conciliation. He considered "sedition and treason" like tobacco and potatoes, the peculiar growth of the American soil.

Mr. Pitt found him a colleague wholly unfruitful in council; and although always apt to raise difficulties, very slow and irresolute of purpose. He said, "He proposed nothing, opposed everything, and acquiesced in anything." The Whigs found, when Thurlow joined them, how infirm a frame of mind lay concealed behind the outer form of vigour and decision. He saw nothing clearly but the obstacles to any course; was fertile only in doubts and expedients to escape deciding, and appeared never prompt to act, but ever ready to oppose whatever had anything to recommend. Francis described him as the enemy of all human actions. The political receipt-book for the year 1784 contained a *jeu d'esprit*: How to make a chancellor. "Take a man of great abilities, with a heart as black as his countenance. Let him possess a rough inflexibility, without the least tincture of generosity or affection, and be as manly as oaths and ill-manners can make him. He should be a man who will act politically with all parties, hating and deriding every one of the individuals who compose them." There were, however, some traits of cha

racter about the judge which deserve credit. Soon after his entrance into the House of Lords, he was taunted by the Duke of Grafton with the obscurity of his birth, when Thurlow, in a tone of subdued indignation, having stigmatized his Grace in allusion to the impure source of his honours as the "accident of an accident," thus concluded: "No one venerates the peerage more than I do; but, my lords, I must say that the peerage solicited me, not I the peerage. Nay, more, I can say and will say that as a peer of Parliament, as Speaker of this right honourable House, as keeper of the Great Seal, as guardian of His Majesty's conscience, as Lord High Chancellor of England; nay, even in that character alone which the duke would think it an affront to be considered, but which character none can deny me, as a man,—I am at this moment as respectable—I beg leave to add, I am as much respected—as the proudest peer I now look down upon." The effect of this speech was greatly enhanced by his authoritative bearing and the terror of his countenance, which, by his dark complexion, rugged features, and bristling eyebrows, made him, as Mr. Fox said, "look wiser than any man ever was." In the House of Lords he was perpetually rising in his place, speaking on every subject, and treating the arguments of the other peers with coarse sarcasm and indignity, as if he were the schoolmaster of a set of boys, instead of the Speaker of an august assembly. It is not to be wondered that he was very unpopular with the lords, as his demeanour on the woolsack very much resembled that of Lord Chancellor Jeffreys. If a proper course to check him had been pursued, he might have been put down; but instead of being reprimanded for his arrogant manners, he was taunted with his mean birth; and an opportunity was thus offered which he dexterously improved by exalting himself: the suppressed rebellion ended in his establishing a permanent tyranny over the whole body of the peerage. Thurlow was quite content with the character of a political chancellor, and so long as he retained power, was indifferent to the opinion which might be formed of him by posterity. In religion he had but little conscience, and confessed himself always a supporter of that which was uppermost. He once said to a dissenter: "I would support your d—— religion if it was that of the State;" and to a Presby

terian deputation that had waited on him to solicit his vote in favour of the repeal of the Test Act, he replied that he would not give it, and added, with a charming frankness: "I care not whether your d—— religion has the ascendancy, or mine, or any, or none; but this I know, that when you were uppermost you kept us down, and now that we are uppermost, with God's help we'll keep you down."

Lord Thurlow never allowed his principles to stand in the way of his elevation; but though aggrandisement was his object, he seemed to seek it more for emolument than honour. After his famous declaration of fidelity to the sovereign, it was certain that he had been in negotiation with the Prince's friends a few days before. The Prince paid some deference to Thurlow. One day, when he was engaged to dine with him at the Pavilion during the race week, Sir John Ladd, a country squire not remarkable for his refinement, arrived in Brighton. The Prince invited him to dinner. Thurlow just arrived as the Prince was mentioning to one of the company his fear that the chancellor would not like his company. When the old lion was announced, the Prince went into the ante-room to meet him, and apologized for the party being larger than he intended, but added that "Sir John Ladd was an old friend of his, and he could not avoid asking him to dinner." To which Thurlow, in his growling voice, answered, "I have no objection to Sir John Ladd in his proper place, which I take to be your Royal Highness's coachbox, and not your table."

In his manner the Chancellor was uncouth, and at cabinet dinners would withdraw from table after the cloth was removed, and throwing himself on two chairs, indulge in sleep during the most important deliberations. Much against his will the King had to yield to Mr. Pitt's dislike of the wily chancellor, and caused an intimation to be conveyed to Lord Thurlow "that his Majesty had no longer any occasion for his services." This act was a surprise; for he believed the King was so devotedly attached to him that he was careless about pleasing or displeasing the minister, and encouraged him to take liberties with the House and all public men. "No man has a right to treat another as the King has treated me; we cannot meet again in the same room," said Thurlow, referring to his dismissal.

He was more zealous and uncompromising than any other member of the Tory Government; had supported all its most obnoxious acts; scornfully resisted all the popular measures of the Opposition in order to retain his hold of the Great Seal; and when the ministerial vessel had gone to pieces, Thurlow had been the one plank to which his Majesty eagerly clung. For the King was delighted with his strong uncompromising language respecting the Americans, and placed a greater personal confidence in him than he had done even in Lord Bute or any other minister. Thurlow, notwithstanding his many defects, had his admirers. A parent once asked him as to his son's education for the Bar. "Let him spend his own fortune, marry, and spend his wife's; then let him be called to the Bar," was the sturdy advice.

He was fond of conviviality, and in certain society would throw off the severity which on other occasions seemed a part of his nature. Early in life he contracted a habit of swearing, which he never afterwards abandoned, and an oath frequently accompanied the expression of his sentiments. He was stern of aspect, with harsh and strongly-marked features; his eyebrows were large and heavy, protruding over his penetrating eyes, which gleamed like those of a wild animal. Lavater said, on seeing one of his portraits: "Whether this man be on earth or in hell I know not, but wherever he is he is a tyrant, and will rule if he can."

A story is told that the Duke of Norfolk kept owls, one of which was called Lord Thurlow, from its supposed resemblance to the chancellor; and once, while in close conference with his solicitor, the duke was interrupted by his owl-keeper, who gravely announced that "Lord Thurlow had laid an egg."

Thurlow had a most thorough contempt for hereditary honours, and always maintained that he was descended from Thurlow, the carrier; refusing to acknowledge Secretary Thurlow as his ancestor. On attending to have his patent registered at the Herald Office, he gruffly thundered "I don't know," to the question of an officer who, in the course of his duty, had inquired the name of his mother.

It was said that Thurlow was a Tory, but in reality he belonged to that portion of society which are destitute of any consistency in party feeling, alternately supporting and abandoning either side,

and obeying consciously every breeze of popular feeling which skims the water of politics. He was an ugly compound of the worst kind of inconsistency; one morning supporting Bishop Barrington's Bill for the discouragement of adultery; declaring "that if he had the blood of forty generations of nobility in his veins, he could not be more anxious to procure the bill that assent and concurrence it derived from their lordships," and in the evening driving in his carriage to Dulwich to the home he provided for the milliner, Miss Hervey, whom he picked up at a coffee-house. Not only while he was at the Bar, but after he became Lord Chancellor, he lived openly with a mistress, and had a family by her; nor were his daughters restricted from entering society on that account. It would not be tolerated now that any one holding a judicial appointment should have such a domestic establishment as Thurlow; but in those days the matter was so arranged that the majority of the judges either married their mistresses or put them away, on their elevation to the Bench. Thurlow left three illegitimate daughters, to two of whom he bequeathed £70,000 each, and to a third, who had displeased him by her marriage, £50 a month as long as she lived apart from her husband. George III. used to wink at his immoralities for the sake of his servility, though the King refused the same indulgence to Fox, who was not so dexterous a courtier.

Wearied of higher studies, Thurlow became in his retirement a great reader of novels; and in one instance, so interested was he in the plot, that he despatched his groom from Dulwich to London after ten o'clock at night for the concluding volume, that he might know the fate of the heroine before trying to go to sleep. In Thurlow's time the habit of profane swearing was unhappily so common that Bishop Horsley and other right reverend prelates are said not to have been entirely exempt from the practice; but Thurlow indulged in it to a degree that admits of no excuse. The Lord Advocate of Scotland, arguing an appeal at the bar in a very tedious manner, said, "I will noo, my lords, proceed to my seeventh pownt." "I'll be d——d if you do," cried Thurlow, so as to be heard by all present; "this House is adjourned till Monday next," and off he scampered.

When Thurlow had a severe fit of the gout, he used to be

wheeled in a chair from the sitting-room by his Swiss valet, who was very much attached to him, and to whom the ex-chancellor succumbed, knowing that his good only was considered by his faithful domestic. The valet, without asking any questions, would tell his master it was time to go to bed, and begin to wheel the chair with the ex-chancellor in it towards the bedroom. "Let me alone," Thurlow would shout. "It is time to go to bed, my lord." "I won't go yet; come again." "No, my lord, it is time for your lordship to go to bed, and go you must." "You be d——d; I will not go." Away went the chancellor, threatening and swearing in a voice of thunder; and so passed out of life one of George III.'s favourite judges. Certainly, not a patriarch of strict decency of language or propriety of conduct. No remnant of popularity was left to varnish the effrontery of his notorious avarice or culpable ambition.

Each man, as he grows older, becomes more faithful to his ruling passion, which outlives all else, and unmask itself as years go by; which is the last to become extinct, and puts its seal on the dying breath. The miser up to the last moment refuses to say, "I give." The human arithmetical machine, who makes no response to the most sacred appeal in his last agony, will answer, if you whisper in his ear, "What are twelve times twelve?" "One hundred and forty-four." The poet longs for immortality, and thinks of his verses; the hero sees again in delirium the trophies of arms and the faces of his comrades; the writer dies correcting his proofs. Pallet asks for his advocate's gown as his winding-sheet. A jockey, thrown in the race, and rolling half dead on the course, still moves his fingers and murmurs between his teeth, "My whip!" Prince Toufakine's last dying words are, "Does Mademoiselle Plunket dance to-night?" Balzac makes Baron Hulot in his dotage say to his cook, with a view to seduce her, "Agatha, you will be a baroness yet." Madame Louise, daughter of Louis XV., who was a Carmelite at St. Denis, became a princess in her delirium, without ceasing to be a nun; and, thinking she was giving orders to her equerry, let fall those last words, "To Paradise, quick, quick, at full gallop!"

Each dies in his element; and so the old reprobate judge went out swearing into eternity.

CHAPTER X.

REVOLT OF THE AMERICAN COLONIES.

The Root of Disunion—English Colonial Policy—An Exclusive Trade—State of Opinion in England—Constitutional Rights—The Origin of the Colonies—Opposition to Taxation—No Old Fetters—Walpole's Comment—The Slave Trade—A Direct Revenue—Mr. Grenville—The Sympathy of England—Stamp Duty—American Resistance—English Apathy—Barré on America—Gross Nepotism—Legislative Incapacity—The Lexington Fray—War—The American Army—Last Words of Chatham—A Violent Radical—Tom Paine is introduced to Franklin—Settles in America—Published "Common Sense"—Paine becomes a Leader—Appointed Secretary to the Congress on Foreign Affairs—The American Loan—A Radical in the Presence of Royalty—Washington's Letter—The Iron Bridge—Paine sails for France.

THE peace of Paris, 1763, had established English power in America on a firm foundation. These great colonies were knit to us by ties light as air, which might have been made strong as adamant, were it not for the crass blunder of a minister, supported by the obstinacy of the monarch and the ignorance of a half-educated people. The aristocracy, clergy, and populace all united to enforce oppressive claims against a distinct branch of the English-speaking community. The King and the people were actuated by lust of power and despotic ideas, which sprang from the depths of ignorance. George III. in his vanity thought only of his prerogative, while the land-owning gentry were actuated by the sordid notion of saving themselves a few halfpence in the pound on the land tax. The merchants alone opposed taxation of the colonies; not that they deserve any credit for doing so, for they considered that the colonist existed only for the purpose of enlarging the profits of their home trade. These selfish and narrow notions bore their legitimate fruit. In treating of the American rebellion, most writers have confined themselves too exclusively to the question of internal taxation

and the policy of exercising the prerogative. The cause of the rebellion lay deeper. The key to it is to be found in the English colonial policy during the middle portion of the eighteenth century. One hundred years ago the whole of the commercial classes in this country were firmly persuaded that the first object of their pursuit was to get as much gold and silver into England as they could. England was to be the solitary centre for the exportation of non-metallic commodities, so that she might be the great reservoir into which the precious metals would flow in return. This was the one colossal pillar on which the whole colonial policy was founded—the extension of markets, with England as the centre whence all commodities might be diffused. Everything Europe most needed from the colonies was to come through English markets; everything the colonies most needed was equally to go through English markets. The absoluteness of this sentiment had grown into the national character, until it became elevated to the glowing position of a national right, into whose nature and foundation no inquiry was permissible. The Government of Old England was sovereign, both in the colonies as well as at home; such was the theory; the next step was to enforce it, utterly regardless of the terrible consequences which might follow. It was the claim to a right of sovereignty which blinded England in this crisis of her history, and the delusion gained easy credence when it was understood that sordid interests were to be benefited thereby. The whole policy of England towards her American dependencies was marked by the vicious spirit of adherence to the letter of a quasi-constitutional right; just as obedience to the policy of an old exploded right, supports the policy of the landowners in Ireland; keeping that unfortunate country in a state of misery and degradation, despite the piecemeal legislation of the most squeezable of modern ministers. To attribute this policy entirely to the King and Lord North would be placing the saddle on the wrong horse. The mind of the monarch during the American revolt, was the apt representation of all the jurking ignorance of the entire community, and the minister's statement on resignation proves that he was only a passive tool in the King's hand. In this sense it is unfair to lay on George III. the entire burden of the disgrace. In the critical election that

took place in 1774, Westminster returned two obscure lords, with nothing but their ancient lineage to recommend them, while it rejected Burke, the most far-seeing statesman of that day. This fact shows abundantly the intelligence of the times.

America ceased to obey the sway of England, because the blood of those who had sought liberty in a desert ran in the veins of her citizens. That, in the course of years the United States would separate from England was inevitable; but the method in which the separation was precipitated was due to the folly of the ministers, the obstinacy of the sovereign, the ignorance of the people of England, and the short-sighted policy of the Legislature. The greatest enemy of England could not have devised a scheme more disastrous than that brought forward by Mr. Grenville, and afterwards espoused by Mr. Townshend. It seemed to have been forgotten that most of the British colonies owed their origin to the intolerance and persecution of the Church of England. America owed nothing to England but the obligation of having sent forth her first colonists—an obligation of much too equivocal a nature to bear a close inspection.

The government of the New England States was founded by the Puritans who fled from Laud, from the bishops, the Star Chamber, and the High Commission Court. Virginia, the oldest of the colonies, was planted in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, from the stock of our ancient gentry, mostly consisting of ruined English squires, given to fighting and conviviality, skilled in gambling, horse-racing, and cock-fighting, most of whom were forced to quit their country, carrying nothing with them to their new homes but a lofty pride and an intense scorn for honest work. The Virginians, whose country was called after the maiden queen, were as proud as the oldest nobility of Europe, and boasted that they were the last to recognize the authority of Cromwell, and the first to proclaim Charles II. It was in the state of Virginia that slavery was first established. In 1703, out of a population of 200,000, the greater part were slaves. The natural advantages of this province, in contrast with the more barren northern settlements, easily enabled it to take the lead, despite the indolence and vicious character of its early colonists. Maryland was planted by some rich Roman Catholics and a number of land jobbers who

went there to make money. The law of real property, with its tendency to favour the establishment of great estates, was imported into the southern colonies. The little education then in existence was the monopoly of the rich. Southern planters who valued the privilege, sent their sons to England to obtain it; there being so few schools in the country. Most of them were indifferent; but some of the colonists compromised the matter by purchasing convicts who had been transported from England, and employing them as tutors in their families. In the beginning of the eighteenth century there were but two grammar schools in the whole province of South Carolina.

The northern and central states soon outstripped Virginia and Maryland in cultivation and prosperity; they established schools and parish libraries, and their industry raised them to a higher level than their southern neighbours. Those apt to set a high value on the schoolmaster's services, are invited to remember that those same southern states produced five out of seven of the first presidents of the United States: Washington, Jefferson, Lee, and Patrick Henry are types of men which the world will not easily forget. New England was founded by the Puritans in the reign of Charles I., and the Carolinas and Pennsylvania in the reigns of his sons, their inhabitants forming a wholly different class from those already mentioned; men mostly devoted to money-making, and not much given to patriotism. Feudalism, with its hereditary privileges had not been transplanted into the northern colonies; it could not grow in that keen air. There was no Church in alliance with a territorial aristocracy, ready to purchase the patronage of the King by advocating absolute principles. The spirit of independence grew and spread, unrestrained by any encounter with old social conditions. The men who were led to reject human authority in theology, soon began to disapprove of arbitrary authority in politics. The American rebellion of the eighteenth century was the complement of the great English rebellion of the seventeenth; but in America there were no barriers, no class feelings, no obsolete ideas which had become too narrow to meet the facts. The strong current rushed freely, unimpeded and unchecked; scattering the old world rubbish out of its path, and making a new course over the plain.

In 1750 Turgot made his famous statement before the Sorbonne that "colonies are like fruit which clings to the tree only till they are ripe ; as soon as America can take care of herself she will do what Carthage did." It was not the expulsion of the French which led to the American rebellion ; it was the arbitrary attempt to enforce the trade laws, the selfish principle of trying to establish a portion of the British army in the country, and the iniquitous desire to raise, by parliamentary taxation, a part of the money necessary for its support. Independence was the root from which the old colonies sprang ; it was the tradition most dear to them ; talked over by the fireside during the long gloomy winter nights. A hundred years gave time for it to sink deep into the national memory, and become part of its character. The American revolt proved the best illustration of the regenerative influence of Protestantism, in sweeping away an effete political system, rendered intolerable by bribery and corruption. The colonists resisted, without faltering, the claims of the British Parliament, as their fathers had resisted those of Charles I. The greatest contest for freedom throughout the world always hinged on the same question of taxation. It was the principle of taxation by representation only, which had been respected by Henry VIII. and Elizabeth ; the violation of which cost Charles his head, and the country a rebellion. The same principle which inspired America to resist the Stamp Act had led Hampden to refuse twenty shillings ship-money ; to pay the sum would not have beggared the man, but to admit the justice of the demand would have made him a slave. The English people then shrewdly held that as long as their representatives retained the power of the purse, they would be able to check tyranny, but when that was given up, the fabric of liberty would fall. It was the old tradition revived in America, and one the colonists were prepared to resist ; for they were not sprung from a race accustomed to suffer in silence. Those gloomy Puritans, who had sought in the depths of the American forests a refuge from royal and episcopal tyranny, had bequeathed to their descendants their fanaticism and their independence. Their memories of the past, their cold Hebraic creed, their rough open-air manner of life, all contributed to form a sturdy, fearless character, not subtle or metaphysical, but shrewd

and practical ; capable of taking a straight view of such facts as came within their range. In consequence of the fermentation of those free ideas which had been in force among them since the birth of the colonies, disaffection, when once stirred, spread without interruption. Never did any country suffer so much from want of men possessing liberal ideas in the management of their public affairs as England during that mighty crisis.

The notion of taxing the colonies was not a new one. In 1739 the same idea was proposed to Walpole, but that astute statesman declined it. "I will leave that to some one who has more courage and is less a friend to commerce than I am," said he. It was as dangerous in his day as it proved to be when its execution was actually attempted. Walpole was even disposed to overlook the breaches of the navigation laws ; knowing well that of every £500,000 gained by the Americans £250,000 found its way into England.

All the colonies were deeply attached to the mother country ; the idea of rebellion had not occurred to them. We had a monopoly of their export trade ; for they were not allowed to send any of their products, with a few exceptions, to any place but Great Britain, not even to Ireland, nor might any foreign ship enter a colonial harbour. They might not carry wool from one province to another. A sailor, by a special Act, was prohibited purchasing in their harbours more than forty yards of woollens. The Bible could not be printed in the colonies. Bancroft says it was never printed in the English tongue till the separation from England. On the contrary, every encouragement was given to the slave trade. In 1764 Liverpool had as many as seventy-nine ships engaged in this traffic, and had then imported to the West Indies and the mainland more than 15,300 negroes. All the produce of America was sent to us raw ; everything exported was in the perfected stage of manufacture. The trade was annually worth more than two millions ; and it was from these dependencies, so subservient to English revenue, that the minister of the day, to gratify the avarice of the English country squires, now proposed to draw a direct revenue. The first effect of this new system was increased severity, both in collecting the customs and suppression of all contraband trade. Naval officers were called to

act as revenue officers; men utterly ignorant of the law, who performed their duties with the arbitrary and insolent manner characteristic of those promoted to exceptional authority. In a short time the interest of the trade was injured, and the expectation of the Treasury was disappointed both in the result and in the method in which the duties were performed.

Grenville found that the whole revenue derived by England from the custom-houses in America amounted only to between £10,000 and £20,000 a year, and the cost of collecting it was about £7,000 to £8,000. The only redress the colonists possessed for the many affronts and mistakes under which they suffered, was an appeal to the Board of Admiralty in Europe, by a protracted and expensive form which was utterly unavailable. The trade between the colonies and the West Indian islands was stopped, and its suppression struck a blow at the home markets, which plunged many artisans who had been employed supplying the Americans with goods into a state of deep distress. The intercourse of the British colonies with Europe was loaded with duties, and the money raised from them had to be paid to the English Exchequer in specie; new duties were also levied on their foreign trade, and a stamp duty was added to defray the expense of protecting the colonies.

Just when the news arrived in America that the stamp duty was voted by the English Parliament, the Americans were repelling a raid made on them by a confederacy of the six Indian nations, who burnt and destroyed a large amount of property. A long line of country over twenty miles in breadth was completely desolated by the Indians, who, heated by the memory of a thousand wrongs, had turned on their foes. Had there been no British troops in the country, the whole of Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Maryland would probably have been overrun. This Indian war lasted fourteen months; the distant states refusing to grant any help. When the colonists returned from the combat, with the war-whoop ringing in their ears, and the smoking ruins of their villages before their eyes, the sympathy of England reached them in the shape of a stamp duty, which proved as biting salt on an open wound. The colonists saw that the mother country looked upon them as a sponge to be squeezed, and that

the debts of England were to be paid out of their pockets. This rapacious and short-sighted measure produced the natural effect ; the colonists met it by a resolution to consume as few British manufactures as possible, but to manufacture as much as they could for themselves. The various classes in England concerned in buying, selling, and transporting these manufactures, were suddenly thrown out of employment, while the public burdens were greatly augmented. The State was deprived of the export duties payable on goods sent to the colonies, and the import duties payable on goods of foreign countries transmitted through England, and in English ships to America.

Such was the immediate effect of the policy of the ministry who had the approval of George III. Mr. Grenville's plan was to join external taxation to this monopoly. He professed to see no difference, except in name, between external and internal taxation. Here it is opportune to state that Grenville was a man free from the suspicion of personal corruption, well acquainted with the details of public business, but entirely wanting in largeness of view and political sagacity. In every respect he was an honest man ; what he did was in consequence of the reiterated wishes of his countrymen. The delay of a year was allowed before the Act came into force ; so far from wishing to oppress the colonies, Grenville allowed great weight to the argument that they were not represented, and proposed that they should return members to Parliament. The idea of forging chains for America was far from his thoughts. He said, "If the Stamp Act is disliked, I am willing to change it for any other equally productive." And George III. declared that the "wise measures" of Mr. Grenville had his hearty approbation. But no single colony authorized its agent to consent to the stamp duty, or to suggest any other to be substituted for it. On the contrary, the colonists were encouraged on all sides to resistance. The Americans knew that urgent petitions in favour of conciliation had been presented by English merchants, and that the leading politicians, including Chatham, Camden, Burke, and Barré, were on their side, but they overrated the strength of their friends. When the news reached them that the Stamp Act had received the royal assent, the defection of the people, hitherto displayed by murmurings, fasts,

closed churches, muffled bells, and flags half-mast high, developed into fury. Every mark of hostility to the measure was exhibited, the Act was publicly burnt in several places, the distributors of stamps were made publicly and on oath to renounce all manner of concern in them, and on the day the Act was to come into operation, not a sheet of stamped paper was to be found in six of the colonies. The marriages even of the wealthy were solemnized by banns, to avoid licences, and all the courts of justice were closed.

The colonists complained, not that England put duty on her own manufactures exported to them, but that she would not allow them to buy the like manufactures in any other country. The Americans would acknowledge external taxes which were intended to regulate their trade, but not internal taxes which were only intended to raise revenue. It was the Tory policy which provoked the war; the Whigs opposed it in vain. Townshend, in the spirit of vanity took up the policy which Grenville was obliged to drop, and dying, left the legacy to Lord North, who was reluctantly forced on by the King.

The Stamp Act, although one of the most momentous legislative acts in the history of mankind, attracted little attention in its passage through the House of Commons. No more than two or three gentlemen spoke against it, and Burke, who was not then a member of the House of Commons, but who followed the debate from the gallery, declared that he never heard a more languid one in the House. In the Lords the measure was passed without a protest; Conway, Beckford, and Barré were its only opponents. Colonel Barré, as a soldier who had served in the Canadian war, warned the House against it; so little attention was paid to him that his words were not reported in the parliamentary history, but they were transmitted to America by one of the agents for the colonies who was present in the gallery, and they contributed more than any other to stimulate the flame.

Townshend, the "political weather-cock," who supported Mr. Grenville, had concluded his speech thus:—"And these American children, planted by our care, nourished by our indulgence, protected by our arms until they are grown to a good degree of

strength and opulence, will they grudge to contribute their mite to relieve us from the heavy load of national expense which we lie under?"

Colonel Barré, after arguing the question, applied himself particularly to these words:—" *They implanted by our care!*" He said, "No; your oppressions planted them in America. They fled from your tyranny to an uncultivated and inhospitable country, where they exposed themselves to almost all the hardships to which human nature is liable; and yet, actuated by principles of true English liberty, they met all hardships with pleasure, compared with those they suffered in their own country from the hands of those that should have been their friends. '*They nourished by your indulgence!*' They grew by your neglect of them; as soon as you began to care about them, that care was exercised in sending persons to rule them, who were perhaps the deputies to deputies of some members of this House—sent to spy out their liberties, to misrepresent their actions, to prey upon them—men whose behaviour, on many occasions, has caused the blood of those sons of liberty to recoil within them—men promoted to the highest seats of justice; some of whom, to my knowledge, were glad, by going to a foreign country, to escape being brought to the bar of a court of justice in their own. '*They protected by your arms!*' They have nobly taken up arms in your defence, have exerted a valour, amidst their constant and laborious industry for the defence of a country whose frontiers were drenched in blood, while its interior parts yielded all its little savings to your emolument; and, believe me, that the same spirit of freedom which actuated the people at first will accompany them still. . . . I claim to know more of America, having seen and being conversant with the country. The people, I believe, are as truly loyal as any subjects the King has, but a people jealous of their liberties, and who will vindicate them if ever they should be violated."

All the colonies had charters from the Crown, empowering them to hold legislative assemblies, elect officers, and levy taxes for domestic purposes. It cannot be denied that England governed her colonies more liberally than any other country would have done. Practically, the colonists were left very much to them-

selves ; but the truth was they wanted to pay as little as they could, while they considered the monopoly of their trade a just equivalent for internal taxation, and a fair set-off against any expense the mother country was put to on their account. Their governors were sent out from England, and paid by the colonists. For many years, most of the places in the gift of the Crown were filled by impecunious aristocrats, poor relations, those who hung about the lobbies of the House, and even livery servants who had won the favour of their masters, and were presented with colonial appointments in recognition of their services, which they often accepted unthankfully, as a sort of banishment to a country little known and less desired. The ignorance that then prevailed as to the character and even geographical limits of this new world was astounding. America was to England a hospital for invalids ; far less prized than India, which had been acquired a little later. Decayed courtiers and bankrupt relatives of the Ministry found a rich asylum in the New World. There is recorded an instance of one man getting a lucrative post in the colonies by prostituting his handsome wife to the embraces of the minister of the day. Even worse cases are given of men taken from gaols to preside in the seats of justice ; others received pay from offices, who never even visited the country. The chief custom-house officers appointed by the Crown, treated their offices as sinecures, and, by leave of the Treasury, resided habitually in England. The history of the colonies for forty years before the Declaration of Independence is full of anomalies ; education was backward, there was no intellectual life, and the pursuit of wealth was the one absorbing passion. The lawyer element alone had attained any eminence ; becoming a power not less potent than the priesthood in a bigoted Catholic country. The lawyers knew the secrets of every family, were the chief writers in the press, and to this day continue to exercise so important an influence in society, that the American boy is supposed to imbibe law through the pores of his skin.

It was an intelligible policy which forced the Americans to support an army for the protection of the Empire, and the utmost the colonists were asked to contribute in the form of stamp duties.

was less than £100,000. England was then burdened with a national debt of £140,000,000. This contribution from the colonies was the utmost the ministers expected from a policy which led England to final separation; the manner in which it was brought about was awkward and short-sighted. A port duty of threepence in the pound was imposed on the Americans, while at the same time Parliament actually withdrew a duty of one shilling in the pound on tea, which had hitherto been paid without question. They threw away a large duty which they held securely, in the foolish hope of getting three shillings and fourpence less, in the face of every hazard and possibly even war. This duty was said to be enforced as an assertion of right, like the Declaratory Act.

The following causes added to the difficulty. The personal animosity which existed; the interests of statesmen to remain in office, of opponents to oust them; the opposition of the Court to all concessions; and the spirit of commercial monopoly which made one class averse to all trade concessions. Popular opinion in England, which had supported the repeal of the Stamp Act, now said that England had sufficiently humiliated herself. The time for temporizing was over, and ministers were supported by a large majority of the people in going to war; fully convinced that the colonists could make no stand against the arms of the mother country.

The first blood was shed at Lexington. General Gage, having sent a party of men to capture some stores in the town of Concord, the road lay through the little village of Lexington, about twenty miles from Boston, where a party of volunteers were drawn up to oppose them. The volunteers having refused, when summoned to disperse, the English soldiers fired a volley, by which about sixteen Americans were killed and wounded. The alarm was now given; the whole country was aroused. The subsequent proceedings, winding up with the surrender of the English army, reflect little honour on English valour or skill. Had there been a general of any enterprise or genius at the head of the British forces, the Americans would have been beaten, for the colonists were not of the stuff from which ardent soldiers are made. One quarter of the army consisted of natives of America, one half of

Irish, and the other quarter of Scotch and English. It was the poor vagrant emigrant from Ireland and Scotland who bore the chief part in the War of Independence, consequently there was much less military enthusiasm than might have been expected. Washington complained bitterly of this want of public spirit in his army. The men were badly provided with arms ; for a fortnight they had only nine rounds of ammunition per man. In this condition they blockaded a powerful English army. "It is not in the pages of history," wrote Washington in his despatches, "to furnish a case like ours ; to maintain a post within a musket shot of the enemy for six months together without powder, and at the same time to disband our army and recruit another within that distance of twenty odd British regiments."

The die was cast. In vain did the mighty Chatham thunder forth eloquent denunciations against the war he had all along endeavoured to oppose. But now that his strength was gone and his party broken, the great war minister, in a burst of pardonable enthusiasm, charged England with employing the Indian with his scalping knife against her own children—a statement which falls to the ground when we know that both sides were only too ready to employ the native tribes as auxiliaries. It was about this time Chatham died ; never had he been more eloquent than on that day, when he was borne fainting from the House in the arms of his friends. The heart of every man in that assembly was touched with sorrow, save that of Mansfield, his old, unforgiving enemy. As the light of the great minister's life went out, the last flicker in the socket was as bright and dazzling as ever it had shone in his youthful brilliancy. The mighty commoner whom England loved, had left his bed to utter his last words in behalf of his country. From the scene of earthly honours he was called from one council to a greater, and his absence was never felt so keenly as when his great heart ceased to beat.

In the year 1774, Dr. Franklin, while residing in London visited David Williams, a man of scientific tastes and deistical tendencies, who kept a school in Chelsea. An intimacy sprang up between the American philosopher and the schoolmaster on the strength of a political pamphlet which the latter had published. During those visits, Williams introduced to the American agen

a certain bright-eyed man approaching middle age, named Thomas Paine, who had been usher in a school, and who was desirous of trying his fortune in the New World. After a short conversation, Franklin was so pleased with the man's intelligence, that he gave him advice and an introduction to persons of influence in America. Paine was thirty-seven years of age when he landed in Philadelphia in the autumn of 1774. He had been a stay-maker, a sailor, an exciseman, a teacher, a shopkeeper, and an author, to say nothing of a twofold experience of the matrimonial puzzle. Such varied accomplishments admirably fitted him to become an American citizen.

Landing in America, he thought of teaching a school, but ultimately edited a magazine at a salary of £50 a year. During his editorship, he attracted the notice of several distinguished men,—among them Dr. Rush,—who helped to advance him. It was the same man who suggested the writing of the famous pamphlet, and the no less famous signature “Common Sense.” When Paine reached America, he found the dispute with England the all-absorbing topic. The atmosphere was heavy with the approaching storm. The colonists had a deep-seated prejudice in favour of the English Government, and a strong hope of conciliation. While in doubt how to act, and afraid to plunge into the Rubicon, that river of self-committal ; a few bold leaders tried to urge the people forward, but none were so enterprising as to dash in and pilot the party. Paine seized the opportunity. He had an eye for seeing a naked truth stripped of accessories which disturb the vision of ordinary men. He perceived that the hour for reconciliation was past, and that the blow must be struck. This course he recommended in “Common Sense,” published in January 1776.

According to the views laid down in this pamphlet, not only was a separation necessary and unavoidable, but the present moment was the right time to establish it. “All things considered,” wrote Paine, “nothing can settle our affairs so expeditiously as an open and determined declaration of independence. This proceeding may at first appear strange and difficult. A long habit of not thinking a thing wrong gives it a superficial appearance of being right, but in a little while it will become familiar. And until independence is declared the continent will feel itself like a man who

continues putting off some unpleasant business from day to day, yet knows it must be done, hates to set about it, wishes it over, and is continually haunted with the thought of its necessity." Paine was as lucky in his time of publication as in his choice of a subject. The pamphlet attained a great success. He gave the copyright up to every state in the Union, and the demand ran to no less than one hundred thousand copies. The whole movement party, with Washington at their head, considered Paine's doctrines sound and his reasoning unanswerable. It then became apparent that the people were charged with independent doctrines, and, like an electrified Leyden jar, only waited the touch of a skilful hand to produce an explosion. "Common Sense" drew the spark. Five months later, as soon as the winged words had travelled over the country, Congress declared independence. Paine caused a chord to vibrate in the popular mind which was already strung to the exact point of tension. The author of "Common Sense" was the first who wrote politics for the million. All the previous learned political dissertations had been so guarded in their expression, and so heavy and Johnsonian in style, that they were relished by comparatively few readers; but the shrewd illustrations of "Common Sense," the homely force of its statements, and its concise and muscular English, stirred the mind of every class. As a natural consequence Paine became famous. He burst upon the world like a Jove in thunder.

His next pamphlet was the "Crisis," written to excite the army and encourage the new movement. It produced a good effect in America, while in England it had the honour of being burned by the hangman. The succeeding "Crises" were brought out at irregular intervals, whenever the occasion seemed to demand Paine's attention; they were read by every common soldier, and printed in every town in the States on brown or yellow paper; for white was rarely to be obtained. One of the American generals said that, to the army, Paine's pen was as necessary and as formidable as its cannons.

Paine was next elected Secretary to the Congress on Foreign Affairs, with a salary of seventy dollars a month. Owing to a difference which arose between the French minister and the American representative on the question of supplies, Paine wrote,

severely commenting on the proceedings. This gave rise to strong party feeling, which eventually ended in Congress passing a resolution of censure on Paine, which induced him to resign his appointment.

In the meantime, the army had fallen into such distress from want of necessaries that the officers dreaded mutiny and discontent. The Assembly were perplexed and discouraged, and had thoughts of yielding, when Paine came to the rescue by starting a relief fund; heading the list with five hundred dollars. It was resolved to establish a bank with the few funds collected for the relief of the army. This plan was carried out with the best results. It finally led to Congress appointing commissioners to negotiate an annual loan from France of a million sterling during the continuation of the war. Colonel Lawrence was appointed one of these commissioners, and sailed for France in February 1781, Paine accompanying him as a secretary, at his request. King Louis received him graciously. In little more than ten years the American secretary, who stood respectful and unnoticed in the presence of His Majesty of France, was to sit as one of his judges in a trial for life. The mission being conducted with satisfactory results, Paine returned to America. When peace was proclaimed, he published another "Crisis" of a jubilant character, but the war left him no richer than it found him; he made fame but no money by his writing. None of the proceeds of large editions had enriched his purse. He had an exalted ideal of an author's duty, when his work is on political subjects. Late in life he remarked: "I could never reconcile it to my principles to make money by my politics or my religion. In a great affair, where the happiness of man is at stake, I love to work for nothing; and so fully am I under the influence of this principle, that I should lose the spirit and the pride of it were I conscious that I looked for reward."

The State of New York presented Paine with a small estate of about three hundred acres of land, Pennsylvania voted him £500, but most of the other states rewarded him with praise only. General Washington wrote him a letter of approval, which he considered the best testimonial of all, and with it an invitation to visit him, which he accepted. Paine's passion was politics but he

had a great taste for mechanics. His mechanical hobby was an iron bridge—a single arch of four hundred feet span, and twenty feet in height from the chord-line. The idea was suggested to him by a spider's web, a section of which the bridge resembled. He made a complete model of this work, but not having capital or convenient skill in the working of iron in America, he sailed for France to lay his model before the *Académie des Sciences*.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

General Causes—Withdrawal of the English Ambassador—Influence of English Aristocracy—Policy of Pitt—French Support to the Americans—Results—Louis XVI.—His Vacillating Policy—Scandalous Manners of the French Court—Comparison of French and English Royalists—English Sympathizers with the Revolution—Major Cartwright—Celebration of the Fall of the Bastille—Cartwright Denied Promotion—Results to France of the Revolution—Attitude of George III. and the Tory Party—Test and Corporation Acts.

THE closing years of the eighteenth century and the opening ones of the nineteenth were full of interest, arising from the extraordinary events crowded into them. From 1793 to 1803 was a period of war between England and France—a war which bore no features of resemblance to any of their previous contests. It did not originate in dynastic pretensions like the wars of the Plantagenets, in territorial cupidity like those of Anne, in the interest of a petty electorate like those of George I., nor in colonial disputes like those of George III. : it took its rise from opinion ; its course was moral. A great kingdom had fallen into anarchy, and her efforts to right herself from social and political disorders, alarmed the world. The French Revolution may be said to have commenced with the assembly of the States General in 1789, when the *Tiers État* or Third Estate declared themselves the Legislature, and assumed the title of the National Assembly. It attained the climax on the 21st of January, 1793, when the king was executed. The interval was an unvarying scene of disorder and violence.

The flame of revolution, once kindled among a people so excitable as the French, spread rapidly from the capital through the country, and gave rise to the most extravagant doctrines and pretensions. In six months, all that had previously existed in

France had been subverted ; monarchy, nobility, the Church, corporations, laws, judicial establishments, and local boundaries ; all alike had fallen in rapid succession beneath the sweeping scythe of the National Assembly. In 1795 the Assembly dissolved itself. It had sat three years, during which it had exercised legislative and executive power in a wonderful manner. Its glorious acts and criminal excesses are the theme of history.. With a bold hand it smote into the dust a monarchy which the superstition of fourteen generations had consecrated. With remorseless energy it destroyed the dominant factions that successively rose in its own ranks. It acknowledged no distinctions, prescriptions, or privileges, save those of talent and patriotism, to which it opened a boundless career. Standing alone, it defeated the confederate despotisms of Europe. Its course was dazzling, often marked with fire, blood, and tears, but it reached its goal ; France was saved ; what was more, she was raised to a height of power she had never attained since the days of Charlemagne.

France alone derived immediate benefit from these terrible convulsions, but her neighbours were horror-stricken with the bloody tragedies which were enacted at their doors. For a time, at least, all political reform was arrested in England, Germany, Prussia, Spain, and Italy. Their respective governments viewed the new aspect of their Gallic neighbour with doubt and alarm. They saw that at one swoop she had rid herself of a profligate court, tyrannical feudal laws, a nobility and clergy exempt from taxation, an oppressive ecclesiastical establishment, of restrictions on the freedom of the press, and of countless other burdens which had well-nigh choked her very existence. Had the real sufferings of France been better known,—the plots internal and external against her liberties,—it is probable that other nations who denounced her crimes would have been more tolerant of her offences. It was the old story of tyranny exciting revenge, and revenge in turn blinding men to every consequence. All beheld the national frenzy, the flames, and desolation, but not their causes or their extenuation. Few reflected that the crimes of a great people, excited and maddened by hunger and long oppression, were not the crimes or wishes of the nation ; that a terrible danger menaced France ; that brute force could only be resisted

by brute force ; that a league of kings—themselves tyrants—had combined to dictate to France her social institutions, and that their intervention was solicited, encouraged, and promoted by domestic treason. It is now perfectly understood that nothing would have satisfied the discomfited royalists save the restoration of the ancient despotism, which the people had impatiently flung into the balance and found woefully wanting. New life, by a terrible process, was breathed into the shattered frame of France, and had she been left to herself to recover the effects of the terrible fever, she would have formed a government which would have suited her actual conditions. What that form might be was certainly not the business of any foreign nation.

The truculent brutality of the Georgian period was never more basely exhibited than on the day when the English ambassador was withdrawn from France, simply because that country chose to do away with monarchy, and substitute a republic in its place. A few months afterwards, when France imitated the example set her by England in the preceding century of decapitating her king, the news of the death of that unfortunate monarch was immediately followed by the English cabinet ordering Chauvelin to quit the country. England, instead of giving her old rival a chance of rising from her prostrate condition, mingled in the fray with the other despots arrayed against France ; first as accessory, next as principal, and lastly single-handed. Thus England became wantonly involved in a war which lasted twenty years, during which it plunged all Europe into confusion, and stopped the march of civilization for a whole generation.

For a long time it was thought that England, after losing her American colonies, would cease to be powerful. The opposite was the case ; her trade increased, her manufactures flourished, her exchequer was full. She had, in fact, reached a height of prosperity wholly unprecedented. At the commencement of the parliamentary session of 1792, both the King and the minister indulged in the most gratifying pictures of national happiness and prosperity. Pitt, down to the end of the year, cherished an idea that England might be able to preserve neutrality.

But the impulse which forced a collision could not be arrested by the most powerful leader. Had Pitt held back, he would have

been thrust aside, and perhaps despised by the very people whose imagination he had captivated.

In England, it was the aristocratic order which first took fright at the doings of France. Foremost among them was George III., who was shrewd enough to feel conscious of the influence likely to be wrought on his own order by the progress of the French Revolution. "If a stop," said he, "be not put to the French principles, there will not be a king left in Europe in a few years." A similar apprehension influenced the peerage, the Church, the legal and the proprietary classes. Earls Stanhope and Lauderdale were the only noblemen who openly defended the French Revolution : some were alarmists, like Burke and Windham ; and others, like Lords Portland, Spencer, Fitzwilliam, and Loughborough, deserted their Liberal principles and flocked in a body to the ministerial standard.

But while England was increasing in riches and population, the other European nations were not stationary. Within the past few years, the character of European society had advanced. The influence of a wealthy superstitious priesthood was circumscribed, four thousand five hundred monastic establishments were suppressed, and the flames of religious zeal, which for two centuries had kindled civil and religious discord, had sunk into ashes.

By this time the younger Pitt had attained a degree of power equal to, if not greater than, that of his father. He was the only minister who possessed the King's entire confidence, and his mastery of the tactics of the House of Commons concealed from the people his woeful incapacity in dealing with the war. It is not easy to account for his silence on the question of reform, from 1785 to 1792 ; that the country was indifferent and his opponents divided among themselves is hardly a sufficient solution of the problem. It must not be forgotten that Pitt inherited his father's pride and love of office, and may, therefore, have satisfied himself with the merit of his own ministry, and believed that, as long as he presided over the State, he was himself security for good measures and popular rights. Subsequent events proved how baseless this estimate was. Well for him if he had died in the year in which his power stood at its highest, and well for the nation too. After 1792 his career was a melancholy succession of blunders, which

nothing could palliate. His name from that time forth was associated with arbitrary government, with harsh laws harshly executed, cruel punishments inflicted on political agitators, gagging bills, and the most costly and sanguinary of modern wars.

Pitt's foreign policy was open to grave censure. It was meddling and officious ; the old error of constantly interfering in the affairs of other countries was violently maintained. Elated by some small success in Holland, he was on the watch for objects of foreign intervention. Jealousy of Russian aggrandisement was the next pretext for vast warlike preparations, and in grandiloquent terms, the insignificant town of Oczakov was magnified into the key of Constantinople, and the pivot on which the European balance of power turned. The war, wantonly entered into with France, was approved by all parties and interests, except by a few persons who were only as dust in the balance concerning the determination of this great question.

Pitt clung to the delusive hope that the fiscal resources of France would not hold out, and that the military struggle would, therefore, soon come to an end. He anticipated a continuance of the war for two years ; it extended over twenty.

This war was begun, to stamp out democratic excesses, and not the crimes of cabinets ; commiseration was felt for the untimely death of the weak French monarch, but none for the extinction of the nation. In 1791 the Poles reformed their government, and established a free Constitution. In the following year, Russia, with the concurrence of Prussia and Austria, overran their country, and forcibly put down their Constitution. Neither a democratic republic in France nor a constitutional monarch in Poland would satisfy the caprice of royal despots. In 1793 Poland was dismembered, and the next year Burke announced that her name was expunged from the map of Europe. England, all this time was an unmoved spectator of this annihilation of a member of the great European family, and expressed neither indignation at the injustice, nor alarm at the loss of that balance of power which for a century preceding, it had been the almost exclusive object of her foreign policy to maintain. In 1795 the professed object of the war with France changed. It was no longer against her form of government, her irreligion, or her levelling doctrines, but against her

ambition and territorial aggrandisement. During those nine years a dreadful experiment had been made, by which rulers had learned the danger of tyranny, the people that of anarchy, and statesmen the risk arising from the interference of one nation in the internal affairs of another.

At the time when King George's small amount of brain faculty became obscured, a great social storm had struck Europe. France laboured under a complication of disorders. Reckless corruption and a selfish contempt for the interests of the nation during many years, at last drove the people to dissolve the existing frame of society. The Revolution was not brought about, as some suppose, by the influence of infidel opinions, by revolutionary doctrines propagated through the press, or by poems and epigrams. It was neither the sneers of Voltaire, the eloquence of Rousseau, nor the fancy of Diderot that brought the movement to a head. The press through France had for a century been working with the corruptions of the Court and the Church, and had taken its tone from the same source. These forces, whatever may have been their subsequent influence, were secondary and not primary.

It was when the abuses in the ecclesiastical and civil institutions reached a climax of rottenness, that the talent and wit of the times fanned the flame of insurrection. At the period in which France had an established Church, endowed with about five millions of revenue from tithes alone, and with nearly half the land of the kingdom, she assigned only a miserable pittance of about twenty pounds a year to the parochial or working clergy, while all the rest was a prey to the vices of a luxurious, idle, and dissolute hierarchy. Such, indeed, was the general irreligion of the higher orders, that the Vicar-General of the Bishop of Autun is reported to have said, "The bishop is a very weak man; he still believes in God." The landed property of the country was so unequally divided, that one-third of it alone was in the hands of the lay community; the Church and the nobles possessed the rest. Taxes were so unequally distributed that the largest of them all, yielding seven or eight millions, fell wholly upon the peasantry; neither Church nor nobles paying a farthing towards the revenue. It was calculated that if an acre of land afforded three pounds' worth of grass produce, nearly two pounds went to the revenue, eighteen shillings

to the landlord, and only five shillings remained to the cultivator, which unjust taxation completed the distress of the people, and not unnaturally excited the violence which followed. The grievances arising from the feudal system were felt more severely in France than in any other country in Europe, and of all the changes effected by the Revolution there were none which went more nearly home to every Frenchman's heart than the famous decree which swept away all feudal privileges, and no subsequent dynasty has had the courage or the inclination to abolish the changes effected in the land laws.

The struggle between liberty and despotism was watched with interest in England. The Tory section viewed it with exultation, seeing the French Government punished for the part France had taken towards England in her contest with the American colonies. The sanction France gave to the principle of popular resistance to constituted authority, confirmed by the King's recognition of the infant American Republic, was considered an act done to spite a successful rival, and one little short of suicidal in regard to the monarchy. Through the example of America, the seed of liberty was sown broadcast among the French people, and soon gave rise to a desire for constitutional reform. A similar spirit pervaded a large portion of the British people, even those who were opposed to the American war. France had a monarch unfitted to grapple with the difficulties of his position ; the people were disaffected, the national debt was enormous, and the administration was filled with abuses. A severe winter, accompanied with famine, drove the mass of the people to despair. The King tried to avert the danger by repeated concessions, which, however, came too late.

There had been, indeed, at first some considerable sympathy in England with the French Revolution, but this sentiment diminished when its excesses became known. The English government at first were in favour of it, believing it would end in the establishment of free institutions ; they took for granted that it had been the intention of the revolutionists to form a government in imitation of our constitution. In a speech upon the army estimates, Fox praised the conduct of the French soldiers in refusing to act against the people, and said it took away many of his objections

to a standing army. This statesman accepted the French Revolution, in spite of all its sinister accompaniments, as the dawn of European regeneration, and to the last defended its principles, and persisted in his hopes of its favourable termination, while he cordially disapproved of its excesses. Only a small section of the Whigs, however, went with him. His open sympathy with the Revolution provoked the anger of Burke, and eventually severed the strong friendship which had existed between them.

If Louis XVI. had cordially united with the people in effecting the reforms which the nation demanded, instead of allowing himself with ill grace to be driven forward to make only small concessions, it might have been better; as it was, his duplicity and insincerity caused his own ruin. Louis XVI. was a weak monarch, with a capacity to obey rather than to govern; besides, he was gross in his habits, and irresolute when the moment of any great crisis arrived. When stopped in his flight to Varennes, and destined to lose both his crown and his life, he made a hearty meal in the house of the postmaster, and declared that the Burgundy was the best he had ever tasted. On the 10th of August, when he took refuge from the assault of the mob in the box of a shorthand writer, while his brave Swiss Guards were paying for their fidelity and his forgetfulness with their lives, he was eating a copious luncheon to the music of the cannon and musketry by which his defenders perished. The example set by his ancestors was not very elevating. The Court of Louis XIV. had been remarkable for elegance of manner, polished taste, and outward respect for religion; but this mask which captivated the brilliant imagination of Edmund Burke was but a thin screen, behind which lay concealed the utmost profligacy. The Regent Duke of Orleans and Louis XV. abandoned themselves to the coarsest sensuality, and, with cynical contempt for public opinion, exposed to the world their own vices and the baseness of their courtiers. The nobility followed suit; they imitated their princes, and spent their lives in scandalous intrigues. All government was centred in Paris, where the gentry resided, indulging in all kinds of vice, and seldom visiting their country seats, unless when forced by the pressure of the gaming table, they went down to drain the slender pockets of their famished

tenantry. Nothing could be worse than the administration of justice ; there were no checks to save the farmers from excessive taxation, or the labourer from heartless oppression. The condition of the people at large was that of hopeless slavery and abject poverty. The arbitrary nature of the French Monarchy, the corruption of the Court, and the degraded condition of the peasantry were generally subjects of contemptuous comments among the enlightened classes of Great Britain ; the phrase "slavery and wooden shoes" expressing the sense entertained of the state of the French nation.

Among the vices of Louis XV., two great scandals stood out more prominently than all others—one degraded his Court, the other led to his death. Louis raised to the rank of mistress one of the most abandoned women of an infamous class ; a woman of obscure origin, born in a village of Lorraine. The lovers she had had in early youth were numerous. She was called "*Mademoiselle l'Ange*" at the King's request ; the Comte du Barri gave her rank by marrying her. She was next removed by the King to do the honours of the Court at Versailles. At that corrupt period, the position of King's mistress was as good as an office of State. As an example, Madame du Barri caused Choiseul, one of the ablest of ambassadors, to be dismissed. In State affairs she showed skill, and her influence over the amorous monarch became unbounded. Like all favourites she was, of course, hated, and, to use the felicitous language of Bishop Burnet, "had none of the decencies of a mistress."

The other offensive scandal was the maintenance of a harem where young girls were secluded for the indulgence of the King's pleasures. From one of these girls, only fourteen years of age, he caught the small-pox. The disease took a virulent form ; the monarch became a loathsome object, his body putrified long before the breath had left him ; all fled through fear of infection ; and thus Louis XV. died deserted, despised, and alone.

For fifty years Voltaire had kept up an incessant warfare of essays and jokes against religion. Diderot and his brother writers taught their numerous followers to believe nothing, to fear nothing, and to hope nothing. The courtiers, the aristocracy, and the higher clergy admired Voltaire, and took every opportunity of

showing their contempt for religion. They lived licentiously themselves, and encouraged submission and ignorance among the people. None of the sceptics of that day could imagine a higher heaven than a state of society in which the nobles could indulge in refined sensualism, and the lower classes would believe and tremble.

A comparison has sometimes been instituted between Charles I. and his Parliament and Louis XVI. and his Assemblies, although the two offer but few features of resemblance. The nobility of England carried on the struggle on the soil of England; some fell in the cause of royalty, others for the Parliament; but neither party appealed to foreign aid. Not so the nobility of France; although they numbered 150,000, they never raised the royal standard on French territory. They appeared in arms, not as Englishmen did at Naseby and Worcester; they did not oppose an army to the Jacobin levies on French soil, at Soissons or Lyons; and so far as they may be said to have fought at all, they did so in the van of the Prussian army or as the followers of an English admiral, thereby taking the degraded position of mendicants for foreign assistance.

The proximity of England to France, and the degree of freedom allowed in this country, made it impossible that she could altogether escape the revolutionary enthusiasm which agitated her neighbour. The theory of the British Constitution was more favourable to liberty than that of any other nation in Europe; but it had never been carried out to its full length or breadth. While liberty was ostentatiously proclaimed, its spirit was evaded, and a wide margin was allowed for a despotic monarch to exercise his tendencies. Major Cartwright, in a letter to the President of the Committee of the Constitution of the States General, 18th August, says: "Degenerate must be the heart which expands not with sentiments of delight at what is now transacting in the National Assembly of France. The French, sir, are not only asserting their own rights, but they are asserting and advancing the general liberties of mankind. But in the sacred name of Freedom and Virtue let her be warned to shun those deplorable errors through means of which the English Constitution has fallen a victim to corruption. At the period of our Revolution, the Legislature

declared and enacted in loose general terms that popular elections ought to be free, and that Parliaments ought to be frequently held, but the more minute rights and provisions on which alone that freedom of election and the benefit of frequent sessions of Parliament were to depend, our ancestors unfortunately omitted."

The political intoxication of the admirers of the Revolution was so great that few were able to express or exercise a sober judgment on so unprecedented an event. One old gentleman thought he saw a rift in the thunder-clouds which darkened the political atmosphere, and when the negotiations of Lisle were signed, congratulated Burke on its termination. "The Revolution over!" exclaimed Burke in astonishment. "Why, my lord, it is not begun; as yet you have only heard the first music; you'll see the actors presently; but neither you nor I shall live to witness the end of the drama."

It is now nearly one hundred years since that prediction was uttered, and the drama is not yet closed, while the deep murmur of profound dissatisfaction from the large towns and capitals is scarcely yet making itself heard in the Senate. The feeling of class hatred, engendered from a variety of causes, but especially from that of an oppressive plutocracy, was never more fervent and sincere than in our own day.

The French Revolution was hailed by the friends of liberty as the commencement of a new era in the history of mankind. If any government needed change it was that of France, for it had forfeited all claim to the suffrage of the people, and rendered her unworthy of their support. Despotism, corruption, profligacy, and extravagance characterized the Court of the Bourbons, and poisoned the fountains of virtuous and well-ordered society, from the domestic circle to the bench of justice. The lives, the liberties, and the properties of the subject were liable to be sacrificed at any moment under authority for mercenary considerations. And the pernicious example of the Court gave a vicious tinge to the various gradations of society down to the lowest. It is not the object of this work to give a history of the French Revolution, but rather to exhibit its reflex action upon English society, by stating such facts as had a quickening influence in our own country.

The violent outbreak in the neighbouring country presented an

extraordinary spectacle to the reflecting mind, and the hopes derived from the emancipation of an enslaved people could not but excite pleasure in the hearts of all to whom the rights of their fellow-men were dear. Cartwright, among some of the friends of liberty in England, attended a meeting to celebrate the demolition of the Bastille, and was in consequence informed by the Duke of Newcastle that, consistently with his political principles, he (the duke) could not promote him to the then vacant colonelcy of the regiment of militia to which he belonged.

No one more deeply regretted the execution of the King of France than Cartwright, while he protested with equal vehemence against the injustice of the sacred name of liberty suffering for an act emanating from "the mean, revengeful spirit of a small faction, the demagogues of an ignorant rabble, contaminated by all the vices which in a succession of ages grew out of a despotism in a vicious and overgrown capital."

The benefits France reaped from the Revolution may be briefly summed up as follows :—The old monarchy was overthrown never to be constructed on its ancient principles ; aristocracy received a blow from which it has never recovered ; the monopoly of the soil, as well as all other monopolies, was destroyed, and industry of every kind set free ; taxes, oppressive by their amount, and infinitely more so by the inequality with which they had been levied, were withdrawn ; privileges of all sorts ceased ; a code of laws adapted to the new order of things was prepared and set in force ; the rule of succession to property was changed, and the abominable and iniquitous principle of primogeniture for ever abrogated ; a new order of men was planted on the soil, who, as they derived their titles from the Revolution, were deeply interested in maintaining the rights it had created. The country prospered as the people felt and saw their power, and the career which ambition opened to all classes was boundless. Genius, talent, and virtue became the only titles to honour and the only passport to office. Hereditary wisdom was laughed to scorn ; emulation and enterprise had full scope for their exertions ; industry was protected, commerce encouraged, the useful arts improved by the contributions of science, the fine arts encouraged, not by the patronage of a titled aristocracy, but by a thriving and

happy population. These are some of the results of the Revolution, which can only be contemplated with satisfaction by those who have made themselves acquainted with the previous social and political condition of France. To descant on the horrors of the Revolution, and the sufferings and misery which attended its march, without taking into account the unlimited benefits to which it gave birth, is to shut one's eyes to the obvious truth, that the wounds which that movement inflicted were temporary, while the advantages it conferred must, from their very nature, be permanent. It cannot be denied that it was those "fanatical fiends" who, by their sanguinary energy, saved France.

While the various political clubs were spreading democratic opinions throughout England, George III. was disinclined to make any concession to the Liberal party, and this disinclination seemed to increase with his age and infirmity. He went so far as to believe that the concession of the Crown in France had been the chief cause of the Revolution. The English clergy, considered as a hierarchy always necessary to the support of royalty, warmly seconded the King, and raised the old cry, "The Church is in danger," terrified by the fate of their Romish brethren on the other side of the Channel.

For some time past the Tories had viewed with alarm the increase of dissent, and now began to call for measures of prosecution, while on the other hand the intelligent classes were petitioning for reform and toleration. The revolution in France was set up as a sufficient argument against reform in England, and the designs of the Dissenters were made to justify the continuance of the Test and Corporation Acts. The intelligent reader does not require to be told what those Acts were, but perhaps a brief account of their history may be advisable. For centuries it had been a settled maxim in England that the only effectual way to convert a heretic was to put him to death, entirely overlooking the fact that the worst use to which one can put a man is to make a corpse of him. This view was not confined to any particular section of religion; it was common to all, wherever religious power became dominant. The civil wars in England dealt a severe blow to the Church. When monarchy was restored, advantage was taken of a pretended dread of Romanism, to

obtain the consent of the Nonconformists in making laws favourable to Episcopacy, which laws were eventually turned against the Dissenters themselves. Blackstone says: "In order to preserve the Established Church against perils from infidels, Turks, Jews, heretics, Papists, and sectaries, there are two bulwarks erected—the Test and Corporation Acts. By the former, enacted in 1661, no person can be legally elected to any office relating to the government of any city or corporation, unless within twelve months before he has received the sacrament of the Lord's Supper according to the rites of the Church of England; and he is also enjoined to take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy at the same time that he takes the oath of office, or, in default of either of these requisites, such election shall be void. The other, called the Test Act, enacted in 1688, directs all officers, civil and military, to take the oaths and make the declaration against transubstantiation in any of the King's courts at Westminster, or at the quarter sessions, within six months after their admission; and also within three months to receive the sacrament according to the rites of the Church of England in some public church, immediately after Divine service and sermon, and to deliver into court a certificate thereof, signed by the minister and churchwardens, and also to prove the same by two credible witnesses, upon forfeiture of £500, and disability to hold the same office."

Those two relics of a barbarous Puritan spirit contributed more to lower than advance the cause of truth and religion. Fox, in 1790, brought forward a motion to repeal them; Burke, however, strongly opposed the motion, stating that "tolerant feelings were a thing unknown among the party who were crying loudest for toleration, that, according to the doctrines set forth by the Dissenters, the Church of Rome was a common strumpet, the Kirk of Scotland a kept mistress, and the Church of England an equivocal lady of easy virtue between one and the other." It is needless to say the motion was negatived.

The Tory feeling of the day was exhibited in caricatures, one of which exhibited Drs. Price, Priestley, and Lord Stanhope addressing the people in their respective characters. The three leading Dissenters occupy a lofty pulpit, and beat the "drum ecclesiastic" in the chapel of sedition. Price closes his discourse thus:—

“And now let us pray fervently for the abolition of all limited and unlimited monarchy, for the annihilation of ecclesiastical revenues and endowments, for the extinction of all orders of nobility in civil society, and that anarchy and disorder may, by our pious efforts, prevail through the universe.” The Doctor holds in his hands a paper inscribed, “The prayers of the congregation are desired for the success of the patriotic members of the National Assembly now sitting in France.” Another figure is seen tearing to pieces a tablet inscribed with the Thirty-nine Articles. Among the congregation we see Fox shouting, “Hear! hear!” Lord Stanhope is seen demolishing the Act of Parliament for the uniformity of common prayer and the administration of the sacraments; and several other Radicals, some of whom are busy clearing away *débris*, including mitres, communion cups, Bibles, and similar articles. Through the window we perceive the people at work pulling down church steeples, and an angel is seen flying away with the cross. The Tory press in this way threw contempt on every effort made by the few independent minds who tried to bring about a wholesome change from corruption to purity.

CHAPTER XII.

GOVERNMENT PROSECUTION.

The English Revolution of 1688—Power of the Press in the Commons—Prevalence of Bribery and Corruption—Necessity of Radical Reforms—Yorkshire Association—Cry for Economical Reform—Spread of Political Associations—Burke on the French Revolution—Paine's Answer—Pitt's Change of Attitude Towards the Reformers—Tytler, Morton, Anderson, Craig, and others Prosecuted in Edinburgh—Paine's "Rights of Man" Proscribed—Thomas Muir and Rev. T. Fyshe Palmer Prosecuted—Severe Sentences—The "British Convention" dispersed by the Edinburgh Magistrates—Skirving, Margarott, and Gerald sentenced to Transportation for attending it—Petitions to Parliament for Mitigation of the Sentences Rejected—Further History of Muir, Palmer, and the other Pioneers of Freedom.

REVOLUTION means nothing more than the transfer of political power from one set of holders to another. The framework of our present government is the result of two revolutions, and the condition of the country is now imperatively calling for a third. Supreme power was first wrung from the grasp of the feudal nobles; and again a great change was effected by the unresisted expulsion of James II. The congested population of the country now seeks to strike down a juggling hereditary aristocracy, which has slowly but steadily invaded the most vital rights of the people. The extensive growth of modern commerce has fostered a new enemy more cruel and not less grasping, which has rapidly impoverished the people by denying the workers a proportionate share in the profits of the wealth which their labour has accumulated, or any participation in the colossal fortunes which these slaves have helped to make. Both classes—that is to say, the aristocracy and the plutocracy—have opposed every measure for the benefit of the people, and have yielded only when necessity forced a concession.

The defect of the great Revolution of 1688 was that sufficient power was not taken to ensure to the people the election of all their own representatives, or a sufficient control over those whose nomination was in their own hands. The aristocracy, emancipated from the king's control, and united among themselves by blood and intermarriage, gained unlimited power over the House of Commons by means of the close boroughs. This power hardly differed from that exercised by their ancestors during the feudal period, except in the underhand manner in which they used it. So long as the majority of the House of Lords were united, their influence over the other House gave them the power of controlling its deliberations, until at last it became dangerous to let the people see how they were hoodwinked.

The House of Commons was almost filled by nominees and creatures of the peers; only a small number of its members were really elected by the people. The united body secured itself from any encroachment from the masses by passing an Act for septennial parliaments. Upon this unjustly-elected corporation devolved every department of government, and thus the power of the State, executive as well as legislative, became vested in the House of Commons, or, in other words, in those noblemen and that small part of the commonalty who had the privilege of nominating members. For centuries the whole power of the State was lodged in the hands of a small faction, whose interests were in opposition to those of the whole community. The reign of force was followed by the reign of intrigue and corruption. It is not difficult to see that whoever was supported by the makers of the House of Commons was master of King, Lords, and Commons. To Walpole belonged the distinction of being the first to discover the method of always securing a majority. He was the first who dared publicly to act on the principle that even a nobleman might have his price. The large sums of money at his disposal, and the number of sinecure appointments in his gift, were liberally applied to secure followers, even at the hazard of draining the Exchequer.

With the exception of Chatham, all Walpole's successors, Whig and Tory alike, adopted the same method of bribery. As the country extended its territory, greater means of corruption were

placed at the disposal of the Ministry, and the number of such offenders increased. At first, the buyers and sellers of power had modesty enough to be ashamed of their disgraceful traffic, and the grace to conceal it at the expense of a lie. They, however, by degrees grew so brazened as to avow their profession openly. They next attempted to check the diffusion of knowledge under the cries of sedition, irreligion, and immorality. The passions of the multitude were pandered to, as was proved, among a thousand other instances, by the destruction of Priestley's house, books, and apparatus at Birmingham.

Under an outward show of free institutions, we have been governed since 1688 by an oligarchy, limited in number and rapacious in character. Its rapacity has increased as it has grown older in deceit and oppression. The spirit which awakened at the Reformation, and triumphed at the Revolution, although suppressed, has never been extinguished. The language of Defoe was caught up in America by Franklin and Jefferson, and their voices were echoed here by Price and Priestley. The example of France encouraged the love of liberty. Bold words were uttered, the sound of which still tingles in our ears. From that time to this, though liberty has been trodden down, there has always been a small party in this country who have tried to uphold it. The nation is now asserting its right to govern itself, and will succeed, although the interested are trying their best to prevent it. The sceptre, which has long been slipping from the aged hands of the oligarchy, must finally be grasped by the people. Those who manage the affairs of State must in future be the nominees of the nation, identified with its interests, and of approved skill and honesty. National happiness must become the aim of the Government; not to hold out a mere bonus to the people, with the object of alluring them to serve its private purposes. A radical reform in our institutions must be begun and unflinchingly prosecuted. The machine of State must be put in good order. The curse of bit-by-bit reformers is, that, by introducing a good regulation into a bad system, they only increase the mischief. All the harm that results is then attributed to the innovation, not to the old rooted abuses, whose contaminating touch turns even good into evil. They "sew new cloth upon old

garments, making the rent worse ;" for good regulations are only available under a good system. If a sound and honest radicalism be set up against an unsound and dishonest one, the dangerous part of those who now call themselves Radical will soon be reduced to their true value. The abuses of all existing ministers, whether Tory or Liberal, should be disowned, and education in all its branches cultivated. No need of hurry or force ; no occasion for disturbance or violent changes. In the past the great object of government—the good of the governed—was not even acknowledged. Our oligarchy was the legitimate successor of kings by Divine right. The people were an engine, which he who managed to scramble into power might use in any measure to secure his own purposes. These purposes were all dictated by avarice, ambition, or love of show. At last it dawned upon the people to take a personal interest in their own government. The cry for economical reform, inaugurated by the Yorkshire Association, took its rise from the distresses of the country, and finally drifted towards distrust of the Crown. The agitation which resulted from it gave birth to various political societies, which sprang up in the towns and country villages ; debating clubs were formed in every tavern, and meetings were held in the tea-gardens and fields around London. Similar associations were established in all the large manufacturing towns in the kingdom. The Constitutional and Corresponding Societies were the most prominent of the number. The object of each was to obtain parliamentary reform. The Constitutional had no fixed plan to effect its object ; while the other was based, for the most part, on the lines laid down by the Duke of Richmond, as declared in his celebrated " Letter to Colonel Sharman." Their ostensible aim went no further than to bring about such changes in the system of electing the representative body as might enlarge the electorate and shorten the duration of parliaments. But they were charged with views of another kind : they were accused of an enmity to the present Constitution, and of covering, under pretence of legal reform, a radical design to destroy it fundamentally, and introduce a republican form of government. That such designs were harboured by many of them is not to be denied ; but that the imputation was applicable to all cannot with truth be asserted.

The Corresponding Society had more than thirty branches, many of them enrolling over six hundred members. The society contemplated spreading itself continually from division to division, and each division produced subdivisions, and so on *ad infinitum*, till the whole country was covered with a network of communities, corresponding with and embracing a great number of other societies. The Constitutional Society had a separate organization almost equally formidable. These assemblies created an extravagant alarm in the minds of many, who feared that the action of the French revolutionists, as well as their modes of address, would be imitated by the people of this country. Most of the new societies which sprang up in England were modelled on the plan of the French Jacobin clubs; titles were dispensed with, and the term citizen was largely adopted. Burke's denunciation of the revolutionists had the effect of inspiring the minds of the wealthy classes with a horror of all kinds of reform. It was not the French Revolution itself, but his "Reflections" on it, followed by other works of the same kind, more particularly his denial therein of the principles asserted at the Revolution of 1688, that brought forward the author of "The Rights of Man," and stirred up the controversy which alarmed the Government. When the people of France had overthrown despotic authority, Burke questioned their right to do so. He denied the very foundation upon which the Revolution of 1688 rested,—viz., the right of the people to change their government,—and asserted, in the teeth of his Majesty's title to the Crown, that no such right in the people existed. Paine maintained the contrary in his answer, and, having mixed with the controversy many harsh and coarse remarks on the English Monarchy, gave needless offence; but this was collateral to the great object of his work, which was to maintain the rights of the people to choose their own government.

The dread of anarchy led to strong measures on the part of the Government, and to some extreme proceedings, which were questioned at the time, and afterwards shown to be both impolitic and mischievous. Mr. Pitt, who began his political career in the ranks of the reformers, had drifted away from them on attaining office. His conduct up to 1792 was friendly towards

the people's rights and liberties ; but after that he showed a rancorous desire to punish his former associates ; henceforth the reformer became the prosecutor. Pitt yielded to the current of public feeling, and became its exponent rather than its guide. It was with the entire consent of the upper classes that he waged war with France, stating that the object was the destruction of the Jacobin government, and the emancipation of that country from republican despotism. This war met with the entire approbation of the Tory faction, who called it defensive, although England had provoked it ; there was no statement that it was to continue till the French Monarchy was restored, but a vague intimation was held out that peace would be made when a stable government had been secured. By endeavouring to preserve the balance of power, England became involved with several European nations, some of which were pauper states, whom we supplied with funds to carry on the war thereby oppressing our own country with excessive taxation. The public debt then amounted to one hundred and thirty millions ! a sum which was doubled in twelve years. Pitt's eloquence won the confidence of the upper class, and his mastery of the House of Commons enabled him to conceal from the multitude his incapacity for, and deficiency in, true statesmanship. He maintained, in opposition to those who sought for peace with France, that it would be futile to propose to negotiate with a government whom no treaty would bind, and who set at defiance all the laws of human society.

England, for centuries past has contained a number of speculative republicans, but most of those who were strenuous advocates for parliamentary reform were no less determined friends to monarchy. A contrary supposition would involve Mr. Pitt and some of the most distinguished ministers in the charge of republicanism. No prosecution or even accusation had been commenced against the reformers. It was not till 1792 that the Government took any formal notice of their transactions. Towards the end of that year there was a great alarm caused by the rumour of a dangerous conspiracy got up by the democratic party. The dispute between the higher and lower orders of society became every day more violent, and threatened very

serious consequences. While the newly-organized parties became the common mouthpiece of discontent, Government was informed of their proceedings, and lost no time in arresting some men in Edinburgh, and seizing their papers.

In the beginning of 1793, James Tytler, a chemist, who had written an inflammatory address, was charged with sedition, and tried before the Court of Justiciary; and, not appearing, was outlawed. His bail was estreated to the amount of the bond. The burden of his offence appeared to be that he asserted that all unrepresented classes were robbed and enslaved, and recommended them to pay no more taxes until universal suffrage was established. Three days after this (8th January, 1793), Morton, Anderson, and Craig, printers, were put upon their trial, and charged with sedition; for having come into the Castle of Edinburgh with the intention of seducing a corporal and some soldiers. The three men were sentenced to nine months' imprisonment, and to find security for their good behaviour for three years. The gravity of their offence rested on being connected with one of the political societies, and having drunk as a toast, "George the Third and last, and damnation to all crowned heads." Booksellers who vended Paine's "*Rights of Man*," or any political pamphlet calling attention to representation, were arrested and punished. But no more public attention was attracted to those Scotch trials than to others of a similar kind which had taken place in England, until proceedings were commenced against Thomas Muir, Esq., and the Rev. Thomas Fyshe Palmer.

The former was a brilliant young barrister, who espoused the cause of the people with more enthusiasm than discretion. He was charged with being a member of the political societies, and with being intimate with the English, French, and Irish reformers, notably Hamilton Rowan, the leader of the United Irishmen; all of which he admitted. He presided at a meeting in Edinburgh, the proceedings and language at which were said to resemble those of the French National Assembly. He was apprehended with a copy of Paine's works in his possession. So far from indulging blood-thirsty intentions, this young man had visited France in order to use his influence with the leading revolutionists,

to whom he was known, to mitigate the fate of the unfortunate Louis XVI. Muir defended himself with great ability. He held that the societies to which he belonged had never entertained any other notion than that of reforming a part of the Constitution; that in Great Britain we wanted no revolution, but only moderate reform; that he reprobated the doctrine of equality, as it implied violation of property; asserted that its equal division was a chimera which could never be realized, and declared that he had endeavoured to promote the self-education of the people. The witnesses in his favour seemed to be on the whole of a more respectable kind than those produced against him. The evidence for the prosecution failed completely in proving any intention on the part of the prisoner, or of any society with which he was connected, having had recourse to insurrection, riot, or any act of violence. Muir, with hundreds of others, had been guilty of imprudence; even—legally—he might have been guilty of conduct not strictly justifiable in every respect, but the court and the public prosecutor maintained that his offences fell little short of high treason. The Lord Advocate and the judges spoke with rare violence, calling the prisoner “that demon of mischief,” that “pest of Scotland, who had intended to revolutionize these countries in the manner of France,” etc., etc. The Lord Chief Justice’s clerk in summing up, took several things for granted which assuredly were not proved, and a degree of severity was exhibited which made men expect a renewal of the days of Scroggs and Jeffreys. The jury found the prisoner guilty, and their lordships agreed that the proper punishment for him was transportation for fourteen years. He made a brilliant defence, but his eloquence did him no service with the jury; the applause with which it was received in the court was construed into a proof and exaggeration of his guilt, or of the perilous and disaffected state of a part of the country. Any allusion to reform was regarded with horror, as the term was considered equivalent to revolution.

The Rev. Thomas Fyshe Palmer was not a native of Scotland, but an Englishman who had settled in that country. He came of a good Bedfordshire family, was educated at Eton, and obtained a fellowship in Queens’ College, Cambridge. He was ordained in

the Church of England, but became a Unitarian on the perusal of Dr. Priestley's controversial works. The sincerity of his conversion was tested by the sacrifices he made, which included an estrangement from his family and friends. Palmer went to Scotland, and, after occupying a pulpit in Montrose for some time, removed to Dundee, where he found some difficulty in instilling liberal principles into the minds of the rigid Calvinists. Palmer was a man of the purest reputation, with zeal as strong as that of an apostle. His correspondence with Muir on political subjects caused a strong friendship to exist between them. He was first charged with writing and publishing an "Address to the People from the Dundee Club." In point of fact, he never wrote it, and one of the witnesses avowed himself the author. Palmer had revised it for the press, amending the spelling and grammar; and it further appeared that he had struck out some passages altogether, and softened the language of others. The jury brought in a verdict of "Guilty," and the sentence was seven years' transportation.

The result of these trials did not check the ardour of the reformers. On the 28th of October, a convention, called the "British Convention," assembled at Edinburgh, under the presidency of Mr. John MacIntire, and delegates were received from political societies in London, Sheffield, Glasgow, Perth, and a score of other towns. Mr. William Skirving, a friend of Muir and Palmer, and Secretary to the Convention, read letters from some of the English clubs, signed by Thomas Hardy and others. Among them was one setting forth the necessity of applying for universal suffrage and annual parliaments to the King, and not to the British Parliament. The Convention continued sitting for several days, conducting its proceedings in close imitation of the great mother society in Paris. There was, however, one very notable difference—the Scotch generally opened and closed their sittings with prayer. Fresh deputations continued to arrive from other affiliated or corresponding societies, and with this accession of strength the Convention became bolder. Muir, from his prison in the Tolbooth, communicated with the assembled delegates, and identified his opinions and principles with theirs. Subscriptions were set on foot for defraying the public charges of the Convention, which did not exceed £3 11s. 6d.

Margarott and Gerald presented themselves as delegates from London, and were received with acclamation. Various questions were discussed at these meetings, which continued till the 4th of December, when it was announced that the Edinburgh magistrates intended to break up the Convention and disperse its members. On the next day the President announced that Margarott and several other delegates had been arrested. He had scarcely finished his announcement, when the Lord Provost, attended by the magistrates of Edinburgh and a little army of constables, invaded the place, and intimated that, unless the meeting dissolved quietly, he had orders to disperse it by force. After a short unctuous prayer from Citizen Gerald, who petitioned the Lord of Hosts to be a pillar of fire to them as He had been to their fathers of old, to enlighten and direct them, and to be to their enemies a pillar of cloud, of darkness, and confusion ; the delegates and deputies of the British Convention dispersed.

Skirving in vain tried to rally the scattered forces of the Convention. On the 6th of January, 1794, he was brought before the Court of Justiciary, and condemned to fourteen years' transportation. On the 13th of the same month Margarott was put upon his trial before the same court, and was sentenced on the following day to the same term of transportation as Skirving and Muir. Gerald, another of the English delegates, had a similar sentence passed on him.

It was generally thought that the punishment of these men was too severe. In consideration of the public feeling, Mr. Adam moved in the House of Commons for leave to bring in a bill making alteration in the criminal law of Scotland, and for allowing appeals from the High Court of Justiciary, from which there was no appeal in matters of law. Fox and Sheridan supported this motion, but Pitt and Dundas vehemently opposed any attempt to change or alter the sentence, as an undue interposition between the decision of a competent court and its execution. Leave was refused to bring in the bill, but eventually Mr. Pitt was obliged to allow a petition from Mr. Palmer to be received, referring to the injustice of the sentence passed on him by the Court of Justiciary. Mr. Adam said that the punishment provided for "leasing-making" (the crime for which the two men ought to have been indicted) was

fine, imprisonment, or banishment ; that transportation was consequently illegal, and he further gave it as his opinion that the trial had been unfair and oppressive, arbitrary and unwarrantable.

Mr. Fox mentioned that one of the Lords of Justiciary had said that no man had a right to speak of the Constitution unless he possessed landed property, and another of the judges had asserted that since the disuse of torture there was no adequate punishment for sedition. Pitt, Dundas, and Windham defended the Scotch Court and its sentence. The majority of the House seemed to agree with them, and Mr. Adam's motion was negatived by 171 against 32. Motions for an examination of the trials of Muir and Palmer were also made in the Upper House by Earls Stanhope and Lauderdale. They were negatived by a vast majority ; then the Lord Chancellor carried a resolution that there was no ground for interfering with any of the criminal courts of justice as now established, thereby putting an end to discussion on the subject.

What remains to be told of the histories of Muir, Palmer, Margarott, and Gerald is of great interest. The two former were brought from Leith on board a revenue cutter, and, on the 19th of December, 1792, were delivered into the custody of Duncan Campbell, contractor for the hulks at Woolwich. Here they were confined among common felons, but were permitted to see their friends. Among those who hastened to meet them in the hulks was Dr. Priestley. One can imagine the pleasure the interview with this eminent man must have given poor Palmer. Skirving and Margarott were put on board the same convict ship, the *Surprise*, which, being obliged to wait for convoy to a certain latitude, did not sail for New South Wales until the end of April. Before leaving the Thames, it was discovered that the character of Margarott did not stand high ; on the voyage he quarrelled with his brother delegates, and was accused of heading a conspiracy to seize the ship in order that he might carry her into some foreign port. All four arrived at Port Jackson at the end of October, and were not long afterwards joined by Gerald. They were treated kindly by the governor and the few respectable inhabitants of the new penal colony ; houses were allotted to Muir, Skirving, and Palmer, near to each other, but Margarott

was accommodated with a lodging at some distance from them. Palmer wrote to his friends that they had no cause to complain of any want of civility. He and Skirving employed themselves in cultivating the land allotted to them, and both sent home favourable accounts of the climate, country, and the fertility of the soil.

Muir, shortly after his arrival, effected his escape to South America. He was at San Sebastian, Rio Janeiro, in July 1794. From South America he took passage to Spain, on board a Spanish ship, in 1796, when Spain had made peace with the French, and declared war against England. During the voyage he was in great danger, for the ship in which he sailed was attacked by a British frigate; he fought bravely, receiving a wound in the head from a cutlass, but had he been captured he would have been hanged. On his arrival in Spain he was cast into prison, where he languished until Talleyrand applied for and obtained his release in the name of the French Republic. Muir then repaired to France, where he soon died, and in a quiet corner of the cemetery of Bordeaux, where the warm sun lies heavy, the impetuous, fiery-hearted patriot found a resting-place, in which arbitrary power or political injustice could no longer disturb him.

Gerald, who was in very bad health when he left England, died soon after his arrival in New South Wales, and Skirving did not long survive him. Palmer lived nearly two years beyond the term of his transportation, and might have returned to England if he had not taken an adventurous course. At the beginning of 1800, he was allowed to embark in a vessel, which he and some others had purchased, with the intention of going to New Zealand to take a cargo of timber for the Cape of Good Hope market. The ship, principally the property of Palmer, was soon found to be a very crazy craft, and though only provisioned for six months, they spent twenty-six weeks in New Zealand, where they could obtain no supplies suitable for a long sea voyage. Famishing, and deficient in the sciences of geography and navigation, they beat about the great Pacific, wandering in search of provisions from one group of islands to another, and never hitting on a land of plenty until they got to the island of Goraa, where they ran their leaking vessel on a reef, and well-nigh lost her and themselves. Having, by the friendly assistance of the

natives, repaired the ship and obtained supplies, they resolved to go, not to the Cape of Good Hope, but to China. Meeting, however, with contrary winds, they made little way; their provisions were soon exhausted; and the ill-repaired vessel began to open at the seams. To escape the risk of starving or drowning, they ran into an island belonging to the Spanish, who seized their vessel and made them prisoners of war, but otherwise treated them with kindness and hospitality. After remaining here about eighteen months, Palmer died of dysentery in the beginning of June 1802.

The only one of the five who returned to England was Margarott, the least respectable. In 1812, he appeared before a committee of the House of Commons appointed to examine the transport system. He died in 1815, while a subscription was being raised for his relief.

Such was the fate of some of the pioneers of a movement which had for its object the interest of the masses. Whether in Galilee or Glasgow the same conditions of suffering must be fulfilled.

CHAPTER XIII.

ENGLISH POLITICAL SOCIETIES.

Political Trials—Eaton in London—Walker in Manchester—Watt and Downie in Edinburgh—Sentence of Death—Alien Bill—Burke and the Dagger—Reform Societies—Arrest of Tooke—Hardy and others—Suspension of the Habeas Act—The Society of the “Friends of the People”—Mr. Grey’s Motion—Public Excitement—Horne Tooke’s Influence—The Government Spy—A Military Guard—Horne Tooke in the Tower—A Mysterious Visitor—Preparations for the Trial—Major C. Cartwright writes to his Wife—Trial of Hardy—Tooke undertakes his own Defence—His Wit and Ability—Pitt and Fox in the Witness-box—“Not Guilty”—Popular Enthusiasm—Conduct of the Attorney-General—Anecdotes of the Trial—A Selection from a Speech—Two Chancery Lawyers in Tears—Sir John Scott and the Pickpocket—Government Defeat—Victory of the People.

BEFORE the departure of the condemned Scottish reformers from the Thames, two political trials had been begun and terminated in England. A bookseller of Bishopsgate Street, named Eaton, was brought before the City court at the Old Bailey, on an indictment for publishing a seditious libel, entitled “Politics for the People ; or, Hogs’ Wash.” Eaton was acquitted ; English juries not being so easily influenced as those of Edinburgh. It was soon apparent that it was as difficult for the Crown lawyers to obtain verdicts in England as it was easy for their brethren to obtain them in Scotland.

The greatest defeat the Government sustained was in the case of Walker, a merchant of Manchester, with six others. They were tried at the Lancaster assizes on the 2nd of April, for conspiracy to overthrow the Constitution and Government, and to aid and assist the French in case they should invade the kingdom. Walker and his brother, Richard, were both headstrong men, quite capable of going any lengths. The former established a branch of the Constitutional Society in Manchester, and announced the object of the

association in an advertisement which did not exceed the bounds of moderation. In spite of this, it caused Walker to be a marked man; the Tories of Manchester emulated the zeal and violence of the "Church and King" party at Birmingham, and tried to put down their adversaries by force. An attack was made on Walker's house by the loyalist mob, which was resisted by an armed defence; upon this fact a charge was afterwards grounded of taking up arms to wage war against the King. A spy named Dunn swore an information, and was himself the principal witness, upon which Walker and the other persons were put upon their trial. Dunn's evidence, however, was shown to be false in material particulars. The counsel for the prosecution attempted to prove too much; some of the witnesses were shown to have been tampered with by the Tory and High Church magistrates, and more than one grossly perjured himself. The Attorney-General, who conducted the prosecution, gave up the case, and all the prisoners were acquitted. One of the witnesses was committed for perjury, and when tried at the next assizes was found guilty, and sentenced to stand once in the pillory, and to be imprisoned for two years.

On the 14th of August following, Robert Watt, of Edinburgh, was charged with eighteen covert acts of treason. The most significant was an attempt to get possession of the Castle of Edinburgh. Mr. Erskine was counsel for the prisoner, and rested his defence on a correspondence carried on between Mr. Dundas, the Lord Advocate of Scotland, and Robert Watt, from which it appeared that the prisoner had been a spy in the employment of the Government. In this capacity Watt attended meetings of the "Friends of the People," with the view of giving information of their proceedings. For some time he reported the doings of the political societies, until at last he was discredited by the Government, and then he became in reality what before he had only pretended to be—a hot reformer. The proceedings of this trial occupied five days, but in the end the jury brought in a verdict of "Guilty."

On the 5th of September, Samuel Downie, a silversmith of Edinburgh, who had been closely connected with Watt, was put upon his trial, charged with high treason. The evidence was

nearly the same, but the character of the man was different. The jury, in giving their verdict against him, recommended him to mercy. No opportunity was neglected by the Crown lawyers to identify the designs of Downie with those of Muir, Palmer, and others who had been transported. The Lord President, who sat at the head of the special commission, pronounced sentence of death upon both prisoners, to be executed by hanging, disembowelling, beheading, and quartering. Downie was respited, and in the end received the King's pardon; but Watt was drawn on a hurdle, painted black, to the west end of the Luckenbooth, and hanged on the 15th of October. The part of the sentence which related to disembowelling and quartering had been previously remitted; but when the body was taken down from the gallows, it was stretched upon a table, and the executioner with two blows of the axe cut off the head, which was received in a basket, and then held it up to the multitude, exclaiming aloud, "This is the head of a traitor, and so perish all traitors." Watt died as he lived, a shuffling, canting scoundrel, and met with no sympathy from the mob.

A large portion of the British community still continued warm admirers of the French Revolution as a means of diffusing liberty. Meanwhile, to counteract the schemes of the disaffected, a system of watchfulness and coercion was introduced. The first rumour in 1792, involved a suspicion that certain foreign agents were dispersed through England; upon that plea the Alien Bill was passed. The object of this was to put foreigners in England under strict supervision, as well as to confine those who received temporary assistance to certain districts, suffering them to remove only when provided with passports. This bill was introduced by Lord Granville. The debate on it presented Mr. Burke in the character of parliamentary tragedian. The orator, to heighten the effect of one of his rhapsodies, threw on the floor of the House a Sheffield dagger, which he had brought with him, and carefully concealed till the critical moment of exhibition. This piece of realistic bombast produced a great effect at the time, and has been frequently recorded to the exclusion of more important events. The bill, of course, passed, as did two others, to interdict the circulation of French assignats, and to restrain the exportation

of naval stores and ammunition. Though Mr. Pitt had solemnly pledged himself to the existence of the conspiracy, yet he made no full discovery of the actual conspirators till the month of May 1794.

Nothing daunted by royal proclamations or loyalist endeavours, the Constitutional and Corresponding Societies issued several advertisements and publications offensive to the Government, the avowed object of which, however, was the promotion of a reform in the representation of the people. They also held public meetings, particularly one at Chalk Farm, in the vicinity of Hampstead, where some intemperate speeches had been pronounced. The ministers conceived it their duty to lose no time in proceeding against the principal members of these societies. On Monday, the 12th of May, 1794, Thomas Hardy, a shoemaker in Piccadilly, secretary to the London Corresponding Society, and Daniel Adams, secretary to the Constitutional Society, were apprehended on a warrant from Mr. Dundas for treasonable practices, and their books and papers were seized. After them Tooke and others were arrested, and committed to the Tower on a charge of high treason. Voluminous papers were brought down sealed to the House next day by Mr. Dundas, and an address was moved by Mr. Pitt, Chancellor of the Exchequer, who announced his intention of proposing that they should be referred to a committee of secrecy. The address passed without a dissentient voice, but the committee of secrecy was opposed by Mr. Fox. The warrants were grounded on the allegations of treasonable practices, and the affair was referred to a secret committee of twenty-one members, selected by ballot, of which Mr. Pitt was chairman. A report of this committee was brought up by Mr. Pitt and read. It contained an account of the proceedings of the Corresponding and Constitutional Societies, together with their communications with other societies within the realm, from the year 1791; the greater part of which had been published in the public papers, without the slightest attempt at secrecy. Mr. Pitt stated that a plan had been digested and acted upon, the object of which was to assemble a pretended convention of the people for the purpose of assuming the character of a general representation of the nation,

superseding the representative capacity of the House, and arrogating to itself the legislative power of the country at large. He argued that not a moment should be lost in arming the executive with such additional powers as should effectually prevent the execution of such a plan. He maintained that a parliamentary reform was far from being the only intention of the societies. The whole system of insurrection was laid down in the doctrines of the "Rights of Man," which seduced the weak and ignorant to attempt to overturn the Government, the same teaching which destroyed what was most valuable in France. The proceedings of these Jacobin societies were only comments on that text, while the Edinburgh Convention was nothing but a hypocritical disguise. Pitt designated the political societies which were agitating for reform as the meanest and most despicable of the people acting on the worst Jacobin principles. The proofs of these allegations were drawn from their own records. He thought it right to prevent, by timely interference, the misery of a short struggle, and declared that a conspiracy so formidable had never yet existed. Mr. Pitt asked that the executive should be armed with extraordinary power, and moved for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. This Act had been suspended nine times since the reign of William III., within a period of one hundred years, but it could not be said that a case of urgency was made out in 1794. Mr. Pitt, however, carried his measure despite the strong opposition raised by Fox, Sheridan, Grey, and others; a kind of panic had seized upon the Treasury Bench, which deprived it of reason. The Act was suspended, and for six months, while Parliament was not sitting, the Government was empowered to arrest and shut up in prison, without bail and without trial, any person whom they might think proper to accuse of treason or treasonable practices.

The society called the "Friends of the People," under the management of Sheridan, Grey, and the more moderate reformers, was invited to join the political union by appointing delegates to represent the society at the projected National Convention, but declined. These Whig reformers, however, offered a strong opposition to the coercive policy of the Government. They argued that a "convention" was not unlawful, because there had been

conventions corresponding with societies in Yorkshire to obtain reform in the representation, and conventions of Roman Catholics in Ireland to obtain relief from civil disabilities. They also did good service in showing that the so-called conspirators took every means to court publicity, and thereby to promulgate their designs.

On the 6th of May, 1793, Mr. Grey brought forward a motion for reform in the national representation. There were numerous petitions in favour of this measure from Sheffield, Norwich, Birmingham, Huddersfield, London, and Westminster; but the most remarkable was one from the Society of the Friends of the People, presented by himself. It occupied half an hour in the reading, and excited a strong sensation by the ability it evinced, and the elaborate analysis it gave of the incongruities in the parliamentary system. The prayer of this petition was to remove these incongruities, restore triennial parliaments, and lessen the expenses of elections. Among the facts stated and offered to be proved, was the assertion that seventy-one peers returned one hundred and sixty-three members, and ninety-one commoners, one hundred and thirty-nine members. These disclosures made a deep impression, and continued to work on the public mind. Thirty-seven years afterwards, Mr. Grey, when Premier, removed the most revolting of these anomalies; but the alarm occasioned by the disturbing aspect of the French Revolution prevented any immediate effect, and the motion for a committee of inquiry being opposed by Pitt, Jenkinson, Windham, and Burke, was negatived by two hundred and eighty-two to forty-one votes.

The State trials of 1794 were regarded with an intensity of interest which had not been equalled since the trial of the seven bishops. The question raised by these prosecutions was, whether the penalties of high treason were to be attached to men who held advanced opinions on the subject of parliamentary reform, and who sought openly to enforce them by legal means. Was it levying war against the King to issue a prospectus for a convention which should assume functions incompatible with the rights of Parliament? Putting aside minor considerations, this was in fact the substance of the charge made against the prisoners. The cases of these men excited the deepest sympathy in all

classes, except in that of the prosecutors. No one who knew the character of the prisoners believed them guilty of the crimes laid to their charge, and the infamous character of some of the witnesses brought against them excited the indignation of all honest men. Transportation to New South Wales, or, as it was then called, Botany Bay, was no light punishment. Those who had been sent there under former sentences were subjected to great cruelty and hardship, and only one had lived to return to his native land. It was currently believed that the Government directed them to be treated with this severity so as to break down their spirits and constitutions at the same time. This conduct, instead of daunting the London reformers, had excited them to greater activity. They passed votes of sympathy with the sufferers, and memorialized the King for a mitigation of their sentence. The prayer of the memorialists was not attended to, but they were rendered marked men by the sympathy they exhibited.

At that time, John Horne Tooke was looked up to as the head of the Constitutional Society in London. Practical rather than visionary in views, and a sincere lover of the Constitution in Church and State, of which he repudiated all wish to change the form, he held that the royal and aristocratic branches of our Constitution were excellent in themselves, and that if a reform in the other branches of the Constitution could be obtained, our system would be the most perfect on earth. Speaking in a figurative manner of the wide difference between England and France, he said of the latter, "That the vessel of state was so foul and decayed that no repair could save it from destruction; whereas in England we had a noble and stately vessel sailing proudly on the ocean; that her main timbers were sound, though after so long a course of years she might want some repairs." He thought a certain amount of reform in Parliament a good thing, but he would not go the length of Palmer and Priestley; no, nor even as far as his friend, Cartwright, who advocated universal suffrage. On that road he would go no further than Hounslow, while others were prepared to go further. There was nothing criminal in the political journey to Hounslow in the same stage-coach with men who were going to Windsor. Tooke boldly and fearlessly advo-

cated parliamentary reform and the correction of abuses, while he rallied round him reformers of all shades of opinions, holding the most violent in check, and stimulating the lukewarm to more decided action. Every Sunday his house on Wimbledon Common was open to all comers who could bring a recommendation from any leading man of the party. Here political matters were discussed with the greatest freedom. At one of those meetings, John Wharton, M.P. for Beverley, Yorkshire, was introduced. He proved to be a spy sent by the Government, and the admission of this man to Tooke's weekly meetings ultimately led to the arrest of the latter and eleven other members of the association. The details were as follows:—The first person arrested was Thomas Hardy, secretary to the Corresponding Society. The character of this man, like that of Tooke, was beyond suspicion, in point of political integrity. He was a shoemaker in Piccadilly, but in point of culture far superior to the generality of tradesmen of that day, for which cause he was chosen to the office. Upon his arrest, the following letter was addressed to Mr. Tooke:—

“DEAR CITIZEN,—This morning, at six o'clock, Citizen Hardy was taken away by order from the Secretary of State's office. They seized everything they could lay their hands on. Query: Is it possible to get ready by Thursday? Yours,

“JERH. JOYCE.”

This letter was stopped and opened at the post office, where it was considered of so much importance that it was sent to the Secretary of State. Its true meaning, however, is as follows. Mr. Tooke, having undertaken to collect from the Court Calendar a list of the titles, offices, and pensions bestowed by Mr. Pitt on his relations, friends, and dependants, and being too conscientious to bring out a work of that magnitude and extent upon a short notice, had fixed no time for it, which induced Mr. Joyce, who was anxious for its publication, to ask if he could be ready with it by Thursday. The last clause of the letter was believed to have reference to a general rising, and the Government was instantly on the alert. Mr. Tooke's movements were narrowly watched, and his carriage was followed to town.

He was dining at a friend's house in Spital Square, and was accorded the honour of a patrol of dragoons to guard the house. All this merely amused Tooke, who was quite unconscious of having committed any overt act that would lead to his arrest. In this he was mistaken, for the ministers were thoroughly alarmed, and early in the morning of the 16th of May, 1794, he was seized in his house at Wimbledon, by virtue of a warrant from the Secretary of State, on a charge of high treason, and at once conveyed to the Tower. Here he was confined a close prisoner for several months, not being allowed to write to or receive any of his friends, except in the presence of his gaoler. It was only when his health suffered that, upon application to the Privy Council, an order was issued for the admission of Drs. Pearson and Clive as often as should be necessary.

There has been considerable misapprehension respecting the precise charge upon which Mr. Tooke's arrest took place; it being generally supposed that the letter given above, which was written in an ambiguous way, was the moving cause. Mr. Tooke himself was for a long time mystified on the subject, not being aware of the existence of the letter, and quite unconscious of having committed any act that could be construed into treason by the laws of England. The real cause, however, was subsequently made known to him in a romantic manner. For obvious reasons it was kept a secret; only three persons were privy to it. On the death of the principal personage concerned in the matter, it became better known. The details of this secret are as follows:—

Upon the arrest of Tooke and his friends,—twelve in number,—the Constitutional Society dissolved itself, as did also similar societies in the country. But in every place the members were marked men, and warrants were sent down to the country to be instantly executed, in case Tooke and the other prisoners were convicted. Happily the efforts of the Crown to effect its sanguinary purpose were frustrated by the friendship for Tooke of an individual of high position. It is possible that the jury who tried him might have acquitted him independently of this act of friendship; certain it is, however, that by it the Crown was disarmed, and the only distinct act of delinquency

was omitted to be urged against him through the following stratagem.

One evening during his solitude, a stranger was announced by the turnkey. Tooke desired he might be shown in, when a tall man, muffled in a cloak, with his hat over his face, entered the room, and saluted him courteously. When the turnkey retired, the stranger addressed Mr. Tooke to this effect: "You are no doubt surprised at my visit, but I beg to say it is a perfectly friendly one; in proof of which I am going to put my life in your hands in order to save yours. I am a member of His Majesty's Privy Council, and my object in coming is to inform you of the real cause of your arrest and the danger to which you are exposed. Perhaps you may remember that at your dinner party on Sunday last, a motion was proposed to be brought before Parliament for increasing the pay of the Navy; and that, when it was objected by one of the company that this would lead to a mutiny, you remarked, 'That's exactly what we want.' This observation was carried to the minister by Wharton, who was of the party, and your arrest was the consequence."

Tooke remembered the whole transaction, and that the meeting broke up without coming to any decision. "I have something further to add," continued the mysterious stranger. "In the Privy Council held to-day, Wharton has been examined, and it was afterwards debated in what way his evidence should be adduced against you; whether the informer should be called by the Crown, or whether they should allow you to call him, and so convict you out of the mouth of your own witness. The Council broke up without deciding this question, which will be brought forward again to-morrow. I will therefore be here again to-morrow evening to let you know their decision." "The scoundrel!" exclaimed Tooke, when he had thanked his unknown friend. "I always suspected him of not being over hearty in the cause, but I could not have believed him guilty of so atrocious a breach of confidence. However, we must endeavour to out-manceuvre them yet."

After this short consultation, the stranger took his leave. The next morning Tooke sent for his solicitor, and in confidence communicated to him what he had learned but without divulging the

way in which he obtained his information. He then directed him to go to Wharton, serve him with a subpoena, and beg him not to absent himself from the court at the trial; that he considered him the most important witness in his favour; in short, that he depended on him more than all the rest, and it was therefore of the utmost consequence that he should be present on the occasion.

This was done the same day; and in the evening Tooke's unknown visitor again made his appearance, and stated that Wharton had detailed to the Privy Council what had passed with the solicitor. Upon which it was unanimously agreed that Tooke should be allowed to call him as his witness, and that then the counsel for the Crown should obtain the most direct and unequivocal evidence against the prisoner by a cross-examination. Tooke now felt completely at ease, and began making arrangements for his defence. He was resolved to be his own counsel. His solicitor tried to dissuade him from this, and after a long argument wound up by saying, "Well, sir, you must act as you please; but if you do you will certainly be hanged." "Then," Tooke replied instantly, "I'll be hanged if I do," and directed him to give the brief to Henry Erskine.

In the month of September 1794, a special commission was issued for the trial of the State prisoners who had been committed by the Privy Council in May, on a charge of high treason. Ayre, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, with Baron Macdonald, and four of the ablest and most experienced puisne judges,—Hotham, Buller, Grose, and Lawrence,—constituted the Commission. On the 6th of October, the grand jury found true bills against all the prisoners—namely, Hardy, Horne Tooke, Kydd, Bonney, Joyce, Richter, Baxter, and Thelwall; also against four other prisoners not in custody. On the 25th the prisoners were summoned to appear. All pleaded not guilty. They were tried separately, beginning with Hardy. No personal interest attached to any of them with the exception of Horne Tooke, but obscure, half educated, insignificant as they were, these "fragments" of the masses represented principles and sentiments closely connected with the most vital traditions of English liberty. They clung tenaciously to the same cause of parliamentary reform

which Chatham held to his dying hour ; the same cause of which the son of Chatham had only ceased to be the champion when the favour of his sovereign promoted him to the leadership of the Ministry.

Horne Tooke was selected that the Government might have a better chance of fixing criminal responsibility on one of the most respectable of the people included in the arraignment. Hardy had been previously tried and acquitted, there being not a shadow of evidence to bring home to him the charge of treason. Horne Tooke was no ordinary man ; his scathing satire and flashing wit had often before been exhibited in courts of justice, but never more abundantly or with such effect as on this trial. He had humbled the haughty Mansfield on more than one occasion, and terrified Kenyon, who shrank from his attacks. Erskine was his counsel, but he undertook some of the most important duties of his advocate ; cross-examined the witnesses of the Crown, objected to evidence, and even argued points of law, in which he was well versed. Horne Tooke was endowed with a never-failing presence of mind and a self-possession which enabled him to seize upon every loop-hole which might be turned to his advantage. He came before the court fortified with these inestimable gifts, and standing on the vantage ground of Hardy's acquittal. His capacity is revealed in the series of preliminary jests with which the proceedings of the trial were opened. When placed in the dock, he cast a glance at the ventilators of the hall and shivered, while, with a serious countenance he expressed a wish that their lordships would be so good as to get the business over quickly, as he was afraid of catching cold. His sallies delighted the audience, who thronged the court, knowing well his cool assurance, and the ability he possessed to upset the dignity of the law officers of the Crown. Presently he made an application to be allowed a seat by his counsel, and entered into an amusing altercation with the judge as to whether his request should be granted as an indulgence or as a right. The result was that he consented to take his place by the side of Erskine as a matter of favour, after a wrangle which wasted time and tried the temper of the judge, while it whetted the appetite of the audience. Besides the gratification of indulging in a joke and disconcerting the judge, the

position which Horne obtained near his counsel was highly beneficial to him. As the Court of the Old Bailey was then shaped, the prisoner stood at a distance of several yards from his advocate, the back of the witness was turned towards him, and he had only an indirect view of the jury. In the station which his tact secured him, the prisoner could not only communicate freely with his legal advisers, but in cross-examining witnesses, could enter into a sort of personal communication with them. In this position every inflection of his voice, every gesture and turn of countenance went directly to the jury, with whom he thus appeared to be holding a friendly or almost confidential discourse. In the midst of the merriment occasioned by Horne's sallies, the Solicitor-General opened the case for the Crown. It was Hardy's case over again, with the omission of some of the aggravating circumstances which had been given in evidence in his trial. The law officers did not venture to produce any of those spies who had been so damaging in Hardy's case. The number of witnesses subpoenaed on both sides amounted to some hundreds. Those for the defence consisted chiefly of persons in the higher ranks of society, with whom Tooke had been on terms of intimacy all his life. They included Pitt, the Duke of Richmond, and other distinguished personages, who, like them, had not only abandoned their former principles, but were now the vindictive persecutors of those who acted with greater consistency. Pitt was put in the witness-box to prove that in 1782 he and the prisoner attended a meeting at the Thatched House Tavern, to petition Parliament in favour of reform. Pitt committed himself by some of his replies; when questioned upon facts that occurred when he was a member of the Constitutional Society, his memory failed him, so that at last Tooke called up another witness, Fox, to confront him, when he at once recovered his recollection, and admitted the facts in question. Tooke turned to the court and said: "My lord, the honourable gentleman appears to have a very convenient memory, which retains nothing he wishes to forget." Wharton appears to have been subpoenaed by both the prosecution and the prisoner, as his name appears for the first and last time in the proceedings among the witnesses for the Crown, on whose behalf, however, he was not called, as previously arranged. Major Cartwright came

to prove what was already known, that there was a diversity of opinion among the members of the political societies. The views entertained by some on parliamentary reform were as advanced as those once put forward by the Duke of Richmond ; others went further, with Paine and the men of his class ; while many would be content with more moderate measures. A few, no doubt, had ulterior designs, and only used reform as a pretext or a means. But it was not proved that there existed any such common concert tending to an end towards treasonable action, as would involve the persons who took part in the proceedings in a common guilt.

While these trials were going on, Cartwright was writing daily to his wife. Here is a part of the correspondence :—" As evidence, I am to be in great company, with my old political friends the Duke of Richmond and Mr. Pitt. Mr. Tooke pleads his own case. The solicitor will secure me a convenient place in court. Mr. Tooke was greatly rejoiced when my arrival was announced to him. He is in spirits. The immense exertion which his defence must require will, I fear, go near to kill him. Erskine spoke in Hardy's defence six hours. At length he was so exhausted that he could not speak loud enough for the judges to hear him, when he wanted to address them, and an intermediate person was obliged to repeat what he said."

If the prisoners had been found guilty, the situation of Cartwright would have been very critical. He was as culpable as they were. He came up to London, and wrote to his old friend the Duke of Portland, then Secretary of State for the Home Department, requesting his permission to visit his old friend Horne Tooke. In that letter he did not flinch from his friend, or spare his correspondent. Again he writes to his wife :—

" Before I had written yesterday, not expecting to be called on, I was at the door, going out on my private business, when a summons arrived, and I went to the Old Bailey, in order to be examined on behalf of Hardy, but I was not called on. The Duke of Richmond was examined. Gibbs spoke like an angel. I left the court with the full persuasion that Hardy was safe. His fate will this day be decided. I got a good place in the court at the elbow of Mr. Grey, and met some friends. These trials will, I think turn out as I always expected ; vindictive and

iniquitous, and instead of prosecutions suitable for smaller offences, in a very few wrong-headed men, magnified into a war upon liberty and its virtuous defenders. But the counsels of God's providence in favour of the happiness of man will be brought about by the instrumentality of those who mean nothing less."

One is struck by the manly tone adopted by Tooke, when urged by the Chief Justice not to acknowledge his handwriting too hastily—a tone serving to show that behind an exterior of levity there lurked a solemn, earnest purpose. "I protest before God," said he, with a burst of conscious innocence, "that I have never done an action, never written a sentence in public or private, I have never entertained a thought on any political subject, which, taken fairly, with all the circumstances of time, place, and occasion, I have the smallest hesitation to admit. I choose my life and character to go together; I wish to admit all I have ever said, done, or written, to save time."

An incident occurred at the outset of the proceedings which displayed the fearlessness of Tooke's character. When called upon to plead and say how he would be tried, he looked round the court for some seconds in a significant manner, which few men were better able to assume, and, shaking his head, emphatically replied: "I would be tried by God and my country; *but*——"

"I need not tell you the heartfelt joy which the words 'Not Guilty!' gave me," writes Cartwright. "Time will show the iniquity of the great." On the verdict been announced, the air was rent with joyful shouts, and Felix trembled. As soon as the applause subsided, Tooke addressed the court in a very few words, thanking them for their conduct on the trial, and then said, "I hope, Mr. Attorney-General, that this verdict will be a warning to you not to attempt to shed men's blood upon lame suspicions or doubtful inferences;" or words to that effect. He then turned round to the jury and thanked them for his life. Every one of them were deeply affected. This brought tears to the eyes of Tooke, who during a six days' battle, while the advocates of power were thirsting for his blood, stood as dauntless as a lion, giving a stroke to one and a grip to another, as if he were at play. The jury were only absent about five minutes, a time barely sufficient to enable them to reach the room

assigned and return. The panel, on first forming the jury, bore such evident marks of management and partiality that Erskine said to Tooke, "By G——! they are murdering you." Tooke started up and disputed with the Court upon their proceedings, when the Attorney-General gave the three last challenges. Besides these three, there was but one man favourable to Tooke ; we may judge, therefore, what the jury thought of the trial when they all shed tears on the prisoner thanking them for his life.

The Attorney-General, Sir John Scott, was always mixing up his facts with protestations of his own honesty and good intentions, quite careless of the construction of his sentences and the order of his discourse. Before concluding, he said : "I here declare that not one step would I take in this prosecution, repugnant to the dictates of my own judgment, gentlemen. Why should I? You will allow me to say after all that has passed, that I have no desire, with respect to myself in this cause, but that my name should go down to posterity with credit. Upon no other account my name will be transmitted to posterity ; with these proceedings it must be transmitted. That name, gentlemen, cannot go down to that posterity without its being understood by posterity what have been my actions in this case. And when I am laid in my grave, after the interval of life which yet remains for me, my children, I hope and trust, will be able to say of their father, that he endeavoured to leave them an inheritance, by attempting to give them an example of public probity dearer to them than any acquisition or any honour that this country could have given the living father to transmit to them." It was then that the Solicitor-General, to the surprise of the court, began to weep in sympathy with the Attorney-General, who had tears at command. While the spectators were regarding with amazement the emotion of two old Chancery lawyers, some one asked his neighbour, "See, what is old Mitford crying about?" Horne Tooke, in a tone of well-simulated pathos, answered in a stage whisper, "At the thought of the little inheritance poor Scott is likely to leave his children." A roar of laughter pealed through the court, in which even the jury joined. When the verdict had been pronounced, it is said that the witty philologist, instead of expressing any exultation, with waggish solemnity declared that if

he should again have the misfortune to be indicted for high treason, he would immediately plead guilty, as he considered hanging and beheading preferable to the long speeches of Sir John Scott. Horne Tooke, however, was not a man to treasure any animosity. Some time after, he acknowledged that the prosecution had been fairly conducted, and meeting the Attorney-General in Westminster Hall, walked up to him and said, "Let me avail myself of this opportunity to express my sense of your humane and considerate conduct during the trial." Nor was Sir John Scott deficient either in generosity or humour. The old judge retained a spark of fun in his eightieth year. One day, while walking in St. James's Street, when a crowd had gathered to see some notables driving to the Palace, amidst the throng he felt the hand of a man in one of his pockets, but as it luckily was not that which contained his purse, he contented himself with the thief's disappointment, and, quickly turning to him, said, "Ah, my friend, you were wrong there; the other was the side where the grab lay."

But where was the traitor Wharton during the trial? Waiting to complete the purchase of the minister's favour by the betrayal of the man, who, he believed, depended upon him more than any other for a successful defence. As the reader will have surmised, he was not called at all, but stood like a guilty thing, enduring the indignant glances of the prisoner, conveying the assurance that the latter was fully aware of his treachery. In fact, so little apprehension had Tooke of the result of the trial, that no more than from ten to fifteen witnesses had been called, when he signified to his attorney that he wished the defence to be closed, being quite satisfied that it should rest upon the evidence already adduced. The counsel for the Crown objected to this in vain, conscious that it was upon Wharton alone their hope of a conviction now rested. Tooke was inflexible, and the case on both sides being closed, the judge summed up in a speech, the delivery of which occupied a whole day, in the course of which he remarked that, notwithstanding the high character of the prisoner, sustained by the evidence of the illustrious persons who had been called for the defence, as well as those for the Crown, there were suspicious points in his conduct which he would have been glad

to have cleared up by further evidence. Why the prisoner had declined calling those witnesses was best known to himself. Before leaving the court, Tooke addressed Wharton. "Thou base scoundrel!" said he; "go home to your Yorkshire den, and hide your head there, for you are unfit to mix in the world with honest men!"

Immediately after Tooke's acquittal, Bonney, Joyce, and Holcroft were placed at the bar. A jury was sworn. The Attorney-General having declared that he had no intention to offer evidence against the accused, they were discharged. A short time after, Thelwall, a political lecturer, was tried, but escaped like his companions.

Mr. Erskine, who successfully conducted the defence of most of the state prisoners, was himself a staunch reformer. He knew both the weak and strong points in the charge made against them. He wisely did not attempt to defend the rash and inflammatory language of the societies, freely admitted that the prisoners approved of the French Revolution, and suggested, in explanation of this, that the culprits were Englishmen and freemen, who desired to give liberty to slaves—the liberty they themselves enjoyed. Mr. Erskine vindicated the right of societies to form conventions or meetings to petition the House of Commons, and to enable the people to regain their rights. The whole institution of the Corresponding Society would be found to accord exactly with the plan given by the Duke of Richmond before he deserted his brother associates. Never were the graces of an accomplished orator more effectively displayed than in those trials. Erskine's defence is still regarded as one of the greatest feats of oratory ever exhibited in a court of justice, affording the highest example of the force of reasoning, the power of pathos, the blandishment of wit, and a display of logic enough to upset the prejudice of the most stolid jury. He was ably seconded by his junior, Vicary Gibbs, who displayed powers of lucid arrangement and perspicuity of style until then unknown, which eventually gave him a distinguished station, and enabled him to attain a high rank in his profession. Touching on one of the most delicate points, Gibbs endeavoured to show that the arming with pikes at Sheffield was a measure of necessary precaution, founded on threats which had been uttered by the opposing party, and justified by the

injuries which Priestley had sustained at Birmingham, and Mr. Walker at Manchester; and he ridiculed the idea of a plot, in proof of which he pointed out that only three dozen pikes and three or four French knives had been procured in two years. But, independently of the eloquence of counsel, the public mind began to take alarm, as to whither the vindictive proceedings of the Crown were tending. The prosecutions in Scotland were harsh in the extreme, and made no discrimination between the respectable and moderate reformers and the furious republicans; and the same tragic results were now sought to be obtained in London. Nor would they stop here, if the Crown should prove successful in the present prosecution. It determined to quash all reform and reformers. In fact, the five years which followed the destruction of the French Monarchy, reflected nothing but disgrace on the administration of Mr. Pitt. The reign of terror was transferred from France to England, where the government of the day attacked indiscriminately both the guilty and the innocent. Truckling rascality and slavish adulation were the distinguishing features of the period. Blank warrants, ready signed, were sent down to the country where reform associations were established, to be filled up at the leisure and discretion of the infamous spies of the Government, who, anxious to show their zeal and to pocket blood-money, denounced some of the most estimable characters in the land, and placed warrants for their arrest in the hands of the legal authorities, ready to be executed at a moment's notice. On the principle of constructive treason, which rests upon an assertion that agitation with which a person might be charged was the originating cause of any outrage which followed, the Government alone hoped to obtain convictions that would strike terror into the inferior ranks. In this they were disappointed. All ulterior proceedings were stayed, and the people were again enabled to breathe freely, under the conviction that, however despotically inclined the Government might at times show themselves, there is a power in the Constitution and in the institutions of the country to counteract those designs, and to re-establish its liberties by the very means taken to destroy them.

CHAPTER XIV.

PAINE IN FRANCE—CLOSE OF HORNE'S CAREER.

French Society in 1787—Paine's Reception in France—The Iron Bridge—Paine at Beaconsfield—Correspondence with Burke—"The Rights of Man"—Popular Enthusiasm—Paine's Political Views—Prosecution—Escape to France—Public Reception—Elected Member of the Convention—Imprisoned by Robespierre—The Reign of Terror—Remarkable Escape—Later Life and General Character—Henry York—Speech at Sheffield—Views—Address to the British Nation—"The Rights of Swine"—The Agricultural Mind—Tithes—Horne's Views of the Whigs—Assumes the Name of Tooke—Diversions of Purley—William Tooke—Libel on Speaker—Prosecution of Woodfall—Horne Tooke before the House—"Two Pairs of Political Portraits"—Horne's Honesty—Lord Camelford—Enters Parliament—Lord Temple's Objection—A Hard Hit—Anecdote—Character of Horne Tooke—Conclusion.

PPAINE landed from America at Havre in May 1787, in his fiftieth year, bringing with him many titles to social success. His fame was higher in France than in any other country, for his works were then in great repute. He had been an energetic actor in the American Revolution, which was the favourite topic of conversation in every house in Paris. Besides, he brought letters of introduction from Franklin, whose great love for France was reciprocated by that nation. For these reasons Paine's reception in Paris was cordial. Visits and invitations poured in upon him; he dined with Malesherbes; Abbé Morellet exerted himself to get the model of the bridge, which had been stopped at the custom-house, safely into Paris. Through the influence of his new friends it was submitted to a committee of the *Académie des Sciences*; and their report was encouraging. Unfortunately for inventors, the times were not favourable for the construction of boats or bridges. A taste had sprung up in France for constitution-making. A translation of the American State Constitution

attracted more attention in Paris than Paine's ironwork. The American Revolution, with its brilliant termination of wisdom, liberty, and peace, seemed to promise similar good results to the efforts of reformers elsewhere. It then became the fashion in all classes of society to talk of human rights and exalt the virtues of the people, at the expense of the aristocracy, which fell into disgrace about the end of the century. The leaders of the new school hardly knew the road they were travelling, and in what it would end. Philosophers and statesmen clamoured for reform and for the public good, provided their own interests did not suffer. The King meant reform, and invited the assistance of Turgot, the political economist, and Necker, the banker, as his ministers; but both broke down under the opposition of the nobility. Paine found that building bridges in France was out of the question. He crossed over to London, hoping that England would be a more favourable field for enterprise. Sir Joseph Banks thought well of the model, and recommended the construction of another on a larger scale. The different parts of the new bridge were cast in a Yorkshire foundry, brought by sea to London, and erected in an open field in Paddington, where the structure was inspected by great numbers of people. After standing for a year, it was taken down, and the materials used in building a bridge over the river Weir in Sunderland.

Paine had forgotten his bridge long before it was removed. His mind was engrossed in contemplating the coming changes in France. Bankruptcy had brought on a crisis in the affairs of that country. In June 1789, a national assembly was proclaimed. At first Paine looked to the Whig party and Mr. Burke as the leaders in England; he did not aspire to be the Prometheus of the English reformers. As for himself, a veteran reformer from another hemisphere, he was willing to serve as a volunteer in the campaign against the oppressors of mankind. Paris was full of enthusiastic friends of humanity, both English, Scotch, and Irish. Among them Paine took a foremost position, being an authority in revolutionary matters. Lafayette, who was trying to make himself the Washington of a French republic, made much of Paine, using his pen freely, and listening to his advice. Paine was in Paris when the Bastille was taken. Lafayette placed the key in his

hand, to be transmitted to Washington. Paine wrote to the President, "That the principles of America opened the Bastille is not to be doubted, and therefore the key comes to the right place."

It was a time of revival in politics; Germany, Holland, and even England lent an ear to the new doctrines. There was something grand in the idea that the prejudices and abuses of twenty centuries would be buried in the ruins of the old French monarchy. Further, that all governments were to be thrown into the melting-pot, and out of the fusion was to arise a new era—the millennium. As each week brought the news of some stupendous change, a kind of madness seized upon the minds of men. So strongly did the current set in this direction, that neither the massacres of September, the execution of the King, nor the despotism of the Directory and the Consulship could turn it, until Napoleon united all France under him and all England against him. The Whig party in England watched with pleasure the beginning of the French reforms. Paine, who had partaken of Burke's hospitality at Beaconsfield, wrote to him from Paris, apprising him of what was going on, suggesting that a national convention in England would be the best plan of regenerating the nation. This communication affected Burke's mind in a way his correspondent little anticipated. Mr. Burke had lost all faith in any good resulting from the Revolution, and was appalled at the toleration shown in England for the riots and outrages of the Parisian mob. It was then he began to write his "Reflections," as a warning to his countrymen. The book appeared in October 1790, and was hailed with delight by the Tories of England. Thirteen thousand copies were sold and disseminated. It was sowing the dragon's teeth; every copy brought out some Radical armed with a speech or a pamphlet. Dr. Priestley, Lord Stanhope, Mary Woolstoncraft, who afterwards wrote a "Vindication of the Rights of Women," and Catherine Macaulay, all were violently opposed to the great Burke. The "*Vindiciæ Gallicæ*" brought into notice Mr. Mackintosh; but Burke's greatest opponent was Paine. At the White Bear, Piccadilly, Paine's favourite resort, where he used to meet Cartwright, Jebb, Horne Tooke, and several of the reformers, there had been a talk of the blow Burke was preparing to strike, and Paine promised to ward it off and return

it. It was in the Red Lion Tavern, Islington, that Paine wrote Part First of the "Rights of Man," finished in three months, but not published for a month afterwards. It appeared in March 1791, causing a greater excitement in Great Britain than "Junius," or Wilkes's "No. 45." All England was divided into adherents of Mr. Burke and followers of Thomas Paine. The friends of the Government carried Paine in effigy with a pair of stays under his arm, and burned the figure in the streets. The reformers added a new verse to the national hymn, and sang,—

"God save great Thomas Paine,
His 'Rights of Man' proclaim
From pole to pole."

Time has taken the sting out of Paine's famous pamphlet, which may be safely read now. He wrote according to the maxim of Aristotle, if he ever heard of it,—*"Think like the wise and speak like the common people."* The notions he propounded gained strength by being written in a popular style, which every one could understand. Fox said it was as clear and as simple as the first rule in arithmetic. Paine knew what he wanted to say, and exactly how to say it. His positions may be wrong, but they were so boldly stated, and backed by such shrewd arguments and apt illustrations, that his very style of writing went far to make any view he put forward convincing. Sometimes he lost his temper and became abusive, which was not unusual among others in his time. His rough energy added to his popularity, and made him doubly distasteful to his opponents. Any one who may now read Paine's opening sketch of the French Revolution, written to refute Burke's narrative of the same events, will not deny the former's complete success. His plain and perspicuous style is often elegant. For instance, he ridicules as Quixotic the well-known passage in the "Reflections" on the decay of chivalry, and adds: "Mr. Burke's mind is above the homely sorrow of the vulgar. He can only feel for a king or a queen. The countless victims of tyranny have no place in his sympathies. He is not affected by the reality of distress touching upon his heart, but by the showy resemblance of it. He pities the plumage, but forgets the dying bird."

Paine considered a national convention indispensable to England, as Parliament, according to his views, if it desired reforms, could not make them; it had not the legal right. He then goes back to the origin of man—a journey often undertaken by the political philosophers of that day, as well as by certain wiseacres of our own time. He describes his natural rights, defines society as a compact, declares that no generation has a right to bind its successors, and hence no family has a right to take possession of a throne. Hereditary rule is as great an absurdity as hereditary professorship of mathematics. He had also a scorn for titles. "Titles are but nicknames. Nobility and no ability are synonymous. In all the vocabulary of Adam you will find no such thing as a duke or a count." In another place he says the right of war and of peace is in the nation: "Where else should it reside but in those who are to pay the expense? In England this right is said to reside in a metaphor shown at the Tower for a shilling." In his encounter with Burke, Paine came off with credit, a circumstance which added not a little to his vanity. Indeed, he praises himself with the simplicity of a Homeric hero before a fight. He was offered a thousand guineas for the second part of the "Rights of Man," which, however, he refused, declining to treat as a mercantile commodity principles of such importance to mankind. The circulation of this tract was prodigious; it is said that a hundred thousand copies were sold besides the large number distributed gratuitously.

Paine's republican and Utopian ideas caused him to be prosecuted in the King's Bench; an order was sent for his arrest, and arrived about twenty minutes after his embarkation for France. The jury found Paine guilty without leaving their seats, and sentence of outlawry was passed upon him. Safe in France, he treated the matter as a practical joke. When he landed at Calais, the guard turned out and presented arms; a grand salute was fired; the officer in command embraced him and presented him with the national cockade; a good-looking *citoyenne* asked leave to pin it on his hat, expressing the hope of her compatriots that he would continue his exertions in favour of liberty. Enthusiastic acclamations followed. The crowd escorted him to his hotel, and shouted under his windows. At a stated time he was con-

ducted to the Town Hall. Paine was seated beside the President under a bust of Mirabeau, surmounted by the flags of France, England, and the United States. More addresses, compliments, protestations, and frantic cries of "Vive Thomas Paine!" Paine laid his hand on his heart, bowed, and assured the municipality that his life should be devoted to their service. The next evening he went to the theatre. The state box had been prepared for him. The house rose and cheered as he entered. When Calais had shouted itself hoarse, Paine travelled towards Paris. The towns he traversed on the road thither received him with similar honours. Although he sat for Calais in the Convention, he had been chosen by three other departments. In Paris he was treated with great respect as a republican luminary, who commenced the revolution in America, who was making one in England, and was willing to help one in France.

After the flight of Louis XVI. to Varennes, Paine openly declared that the king was a "political superfluity." He had also taken a leading part in some of the politico-theatrical entertainments then so frequent in the streets of Paris. But when the king was found guilty, and it came to the final vote whether he should be imprisoned, banished, or beheaded, Paine did not hesitate to give his vote for banishment. Marat objected to its reception, because Paine was a professed Quaker, and opposed to capital punishment on principle. After that the extreme party denounced him as a traitor to the cause.

Soon after the execution of the king, Paris fell into the hands of the lowest classes. Their leaders ruled with terrible energy, and for a time the whole nation became politically drunk, and revelled in excesses which struck all Europe with consternation. A period well summed up by Emerson: "To-day pasteboard and filigree; to-morrow madness and murder."

Disgusted with the turn of events, Paine removed to a remote quarter of Paris, and took rooms in a house which once belonged to Madame de Pompadour. Brissot, Thomas Christie, Mary Woolstoncraft, and Joel Barlow were his principal associates. When the reign of terror was fully established, the little party seldom left their walls, and amused themselves as best they could with conversation and games. The terrible news of the streets reached them

in their retreat as if they were miles away in some quiet place. After a few weeks, two of the number escaped to Switzerland, leaving their enthusiasm for humanity behind them. Before a month was over, the landlord was carried off in the night, and a file of armed men came to capture those that remained. Last of all came the turn of Paine. He was arrested in December by order of Robespierre. On his way to Luxembourg he stopped at Barlow's lodgings and left him the first part of the "Age of Reason," finished the day before. The Americans in Paris applied to the Convention for Paine's release; it was denied, on the ground that he was an Englishman. The news of the outer world reached the unfortunate prisoners, penned up like sheep waiting for the butcher, only when the doors of the dungeon opened to admit a new batch of victims. They knew that the revolution had made another stride forward, and had trodden down its first leaders as it moved on. Paine saw them all—Ronsin, Hébert, Momoro, Chaumette, Gobel; the crazy and the vile mingled together, the very men he had cursed in his garden of St. Denis—pass before him like the shadows of a magic-lantern, entering at one side and gliding out at another—to death. A few days later came Danton, Camille Desmoulins, and the few who remained of the moderate party. Paine was standing near the wicket when they were brought in. Danton embraced him. "What you have done for the happiness and liberty of your country, I have in vain tried to do for mine. I have been less fortunate, but not more culpable. I am sent to the scaffold." Turning to his friends: "Eh, bien, mes amis, allons-y gaiement." Happy Frenchmen, who can strike an attitude even in the agonies of death! In July the carnage had reached its height. No man could count upon his life for twenty-four hours. It seemed to Paine that Robespierre and the Committee were afraid to leave a man alive. He expected daily his own summons; but he was overlooked. His escape may be attributed to a severe illness, which for a time kept him out of sight, and a clerical error on the part of the gaoler. When persons by scores were to be taken out of prison for the guillotine, it was always done at night, and those who performed the office had a private mark by which they knew what room to go to, and what numbers to take. The room in which Paine was confined was one of a long range of cells under

a gallery on the ground floor. The door of it opened outward, and lay flat against the wall, so that when it was opened, the inside of the door appeared outward, and the contrary when shut. Four of these doors, unobserved by the prisoners, were marked with a number in chalk, but the mark was put on when the door was open, and thereby came on the inside when shut at night, and so the destroying angel passed by it.

After the fall of Robespierre, seventy-three members of the Convention who survived the reign of terror resumed their seats, but Paine was not released. Neither did the American Government take any steps to rescue him. At last he was discharged after being eleven months incarcerated, with unshaken confidence in his own greatness, but in appearance only the shadow of his former self. His health was broken, and his mind became distorted by brooding over the ingratitude and neglect of the American people, who owed so much to him. In 1795 the Convention was dissolved, and Paine ceased to be a legislator of France. After this little is known of him, except that he lived in humble lodgings with a printer, and only occasionally showed himself to the French public; once, in delivering a sermon to one of the Theophilanthropist congregations. His theme was the existence of God, and the propriety of combining the study of natural science with theology. He kept this discourse in his memory of brass to confound all who accused him of irreligion. His "Age of Reason" was an attempt to prepare a theology for the Republic; while his pamphlet on the "Decline and Fall of the English System of Finance" is a performance characteristic of the man—sound, clear sense mixed with ignorance and arrogance. His remarks on paper money are excellent, and his sneer at the Sinking Fund Scheme, then considered a great invention in finance, well placed. He says: "As to Mr. Pitt's project for paying off the National Debt by applying a million a year for that purpose, while he continues adding more than twenty millions a year to it, is like setting a man with a wooden leg to run after a hare;—the longer he runs, the further he is off."

The end of the child's play of government and religion, exhibited by the Revolution, was checked by Napoleon, when he landed in France in October 1799, and sent a file of soldiers to turn out the

Ancients and Five Hundred, and seated himself in the chair of state. In 1802, after the peace with England, Paine sailed for America, to end his days in the United States. It is hardly necessary to sum up his vices or his virtues; a few outlines of his character and history have been noticed because of his prominence in the great Radical movement. Without him its history would be an exhibition of the play of *Hamlet* without the Prince. It is very doubtful whether this supposed ally of Satan was as black as he has been painted.

The history of the Radical progress of the period would be incomplete without mentioning the names of a few of the delegates and secretaries of the various political societies. Those men are now forgotten, but the reader will be able to appreciate the value of their assistance to the popular cause, by a few extracts taken from the speeches, addresses, and pamphlets issued by them. They were not all empty-headed firebrands, as their enemies described them, but earnest, intelligent men, actuated by pure motives, who loved their country, and were ready to lay down their lives for the opinions they tried to propagate. No doubt they were sometimes mistaken in their prognostics of the future, and not always discreet in their language—faults which they shared with the purest patriots of every country. Whether they should be more honoured than the men who have gained renown by successfully blowing their neighbours' bodies to pieces by means of gunpowder, is a question left entirely to the reader's judgment. Enough to say, that the first Reform Bill, carried by Earl Grey and Lord Russell after a long and protracted fight, and giving so little, was mainly won by the undaunted exertions of Horne Tooke, Wilkes, Cartwright, Jebb, Muir, and Palmer, who first stormed the outworks and attacked the citadel. It is no less true that the list of pioneers may be justly augmented with the names of Yorke, Hardy, Barlow, Buckle, and Sinclair, who bore no insignificant part in the campaign.

On the 7th of April, 1794, about twelve thousand citizens of Sheffield, enraged at the conduct of the Government towards Muir, Palmer, Skirving, Margarott, and Gerald, assembled on Castle Hill to express their indignation. Henry Yorke having been voted to the chair, the business was opened by a proposed

petition to the King in behalf of the suffering patriots. Among other matters it stated : " Let it not be recorded in the history of this country that King George III. or any of his judges transported men for fourteen years, because they had dared to speak the same words upon a speculative subject which, if they were not the immediate means of advancing his Majesty's then prime minister, caused his election to be remarkably popular ; let it not be said that men of education, of refined sentiments, of virtuous and benevolent characters, were severed from their dearest connections and plunged into dungeons with thieves and prostitutes ; let it not be said that fathers were torn from their wives and children, sons from their aged parents, because they had the virtue to condemn openly the acknowledged corruptions of government, and to exert every peaceable means in their power to remove them ; let it not be said that it was as a great a crime to speak the TRUTH as to be guilty of FELONY. But rather, O King, let it be recorded that George III. had the wisdom, the humanity, and the justice to step in betwixt these severe and cruel sentences and their execution.

" These are our desires—these our plain sentiments. We know they are such as your Majesty is unaccustomed to hear ; but if they are supported by truth and wisdom, suffer not the homeliness of our manner to offend your Majesty. We are plain men, and will not flatter a king. If our wishes be attended to, we are persuaded it will, in some degree, hush the murmurs which unreasonable severity in a government never fails to excite ; and it may also avert that storm which it is but too evident has been awfully gathering, and which may burst forth in a moment when your Majesty thinks not."

This petition was followed by another for reform in the representation of the people, upon which Henry Yorke addressed the meeting in an animated speech occupying an hour in delivery. He took a general review of the British Constitution, and stated its most prominent defects ; among which the want of perfect national representation was the most glaring.

He observed that the subject of parliamentary reform was become a mere bugbear, employed to deceive the people, and worked as an engine to raise into power needy and ambitious men ; and that the very same men who in opposition had declared

that it was the only measure of saving the country from ruin, were the first to reprobate and scout any measure of reform when they were in power. From the corruptions of the British Government, parties had been generated, which in their route to power had convulsed and plundered the Empire. Under the influence of names, principles had been forgotten; and for the sake of leaders, whom the people had foolishly idolized, the machine of government rolled on amidst the feuds and contentions of party, the peace of the country had been eternally disturbed by the rancour and animosities of factions, and the people, instead of turning themselves to correct the gross evils which existed, had ever been the tools of base and designing men, and seemed prepared to whet and sharpen their swords one against another.

"The human mind is progressive," he went on; "so is the social mind. That the one, therefore, should remain stationary amid the rapid course of the other towards perfection, is a prejudice as unnatural as it is injurious to the happiness of man. The governments of Europe present no delectable symmetry to the contemplation of the philosopher, no enjoyment to the satisfaction of the citizen. A vast, deformed and cheerless structure, the frightful abortion of haste and usurpation, presents to the eye of the beholder no systematic arrangement, no harmonious organization of society. Chance, haste, faction, tyranny, rebellion, massacre, and the hot inclement action of human passions have begotten them. Utility never has been the end of their institutions, but partial interest has been its fruit. Experience must regulate the mechanism of government; by which I mean not a narrow and confined, but a liberal and enlightened experience, which, hearing without passion or prejudice the testimony of ages and nations, collects from it general principles to further the progress of civilization.

"To effect this just and useful purpose revolution of sentiment must precede revolution of government and manners. The popular energies must be excited, that the popular voice may be felt and heard. The people must grow wise, in order that the people may rule. It is said we are levellers; but those are levellers who would wish to reduce man to the condition of the brute. Those are levellers whose hands are dipped in the public spoils,

who would make humanity take a retrograde motion ; who would palsy the arm of justice, and defeat the end of equal laws. We have ever disclaimed the foolish idea of levelling property, because our own property, the fruit of our labours or of our talents, might by the example be exposed to the invasion of the first intruder. It would be well if those who confound justice with crimes would consider that the poor man's property, little as it is, is as precious to him as the wealthy stock of the rich man. It were well if, feeling the force of this principle, the aristocracy would unite with us in the cause in which we are embarked. Property, they say, is sacred. Is not, then, the property of the poor man as sacred as that of the rich, and ought it to be filched or forced from him without his consent, any more than that of the rich man ? Can those who do not respect the property of others expect others to respect their property ? We wish to exalt, not to level. We wish to better the condition of the wretched ; to equalize men under the influence of the law, and to give to merit, industry, talents, and virtue their proper weight and corresponding dignity in the social order.

“I repeat my former assertion. Go on, as you have hitherto done, in the culture of reason. Disseminate that knowledge which is so necessary to man's happiness. Teach your children and your countrymen the sacred lessons of virtue, which are the foundation of all human polity. Teach them to respect themselves, and to love their country. Teach them to do unto all men as they would that they should do unto them, and their love shall not be confined to their country, but shall extend to the whole human race. When such a revolution of sentiment shall have dispersed the mists of prejudice ; when by the incessant thunderings of the press, the meanest cottager of our country shall be enlightened, and the sun of reason shall shine in its fullest meridian over us,—then the commanding voice of the whole people shall recommend the five hundred and fifty-eight gentlemen in St. Stephen's chapel to go about their business.”

Here is another extract from “an address to the British nation” :—

“Our petition was received with the utmost indignation by the House of Commons, which was no more than we expected. We knew that the homely truths we uttered would be very unwelcome

guests in that House. We never expected that a body in which there were so many placemen and pensioners would listen to the palpable facts stated in that petition ; the object of which was to root out injustice, and to curb licentiousness and corruption. If the House of Commons were the real representatives of the people, we certainly had a right to dictate, not petition, because they could be considered in no other light than the organs of the public will. And if they refused to obey that will, they would be usurpers and not representatives. If they are not our representatives, we cannot be their constituents, and to petition them is an insult to ourselves. If grievances, abuses, complaints, and truth are to be discarded from that House, because not dressed in a gentlemanlike language, how are we plain mechanics ever to obtain redress, who are not gentlemen, and who are consequently ignorant of those polite and courtly expressions which are necessary to gain a hearing in that House? We are ignorant of the art of displaying truth by halves, and as we love plain dealing ourselves, we detest hypocrisy in others, and pity those who would wish us to follow their example. We said to the House of Commons, ‘ We are wronged and aggrieved—will you right us and redress our grievances, or will you not? If you will, we shall be satisfied ; if you will not, we shall seek redress some other way. As our petition has been scouted, we shall trouble them no more with our coarse and unmannerly language. It will be our duty to proceed, as we have uniformly done hitherto, in enlightening the public mind ; and when a complete revolution of sentiment shall take place in our country, we shall open our mouths in that key we think most agreeable to ourselves ; and our voice, together with that of our disfranchised countrymen, will resemble, perhaps, the thunderings from Mount Sinai.”

“The Rights of Swine” was an address printed and published in Stockport January 5th, 1794. “Hard, indeed, must be the heart which is unaffected with the present distress experienced by the poor in general, in this commercial country. Thousands of honest and industrious people in Great Britain are literally starving for want of bread ; and the cause invariably assigned is a stagnant commerce. My opinion on the subject is that stagnant commerce is not the real cause of the want of the necessities of life among

the laborious poor. And I am confident that while the earth yields her increase, there is a method founded on Justice and Reason to prevent the poor from wanting bread, be the state of trade whatever it may.

“In the first place, then, I will ask, what are the principal sources of human subsistence? Certainly corn and grass. Corn is moulded into many shapes for the use of man, but chiefly into bread, which is the staff of life; and from grass we derive our flesh, milk, butter, cheese, and, besides, wool and leather, which, I think, with the addition of coal and a few other minerals, nearly make up the real necessities of life.

“I ask, then, who is so infatuated as to say that the growing of corn or grass is not dependent on, or connected with, the prosperity or adversity of trade? Corn grows not on the loom, nor grass upon the anvil. Why is it, then, while there is plenty the poor are starving? Is there not as much grain in the land as when trade flourished? Suppose trade was to rise immediately to an amazing degree, would it make one grain or blade of grass? Certainly not. Why, then, are the poor, who are the peculiar care of Him Who delights to do His needy creatures good, not satisfied with the good of the land?

“The following reasons are at least satisfactory to myself:—Because in the time of national prosperity house and land rent (consequently provisions) are always raised by the wealthy and voluptuous, till they are at least at par with high wages; but when war, or any other cause, has ruined or impeded commerce, and reduced wages, rents and provisions remain unabated. The poor calico weavers of Manchester notoriously illustrate this argument, as they are now working for fifty and sixty per cent. less wages than at this time two years back, and the necessities of life are rather augmented in their prices than diminished.

“Hearken, O ye poor of the land! While great men have an unbounded power to raise their rents and your provisions, and, at the same time, an uncontrolled power to make war, and consequently to dry up or diminish the sources of your income, your subsistence will, at best, be precarious, and your very existence often miserable. The present want of bread amongst the poor is not owing to want of grain in the world, nor, I presume. in this

land, but owing to the price of it being excessively above the price of labour. When, therefore, the price of labour cannot be brought up to the rate of provisions, provisions should be reduced to the rate of labour. Till this is practicable, the poor are wretched.

“During the last twenty years, mechanical wages have been varied twenty, thirty, forty, and even fifty per cent. But with regard to land rent, its variations have always been progressive; and to find a single instance to the contrary would be impossible. It requires little sagacity to see that Game Laws, Riot Acts, Laws against Vagrants and Felons, etc., etc., are made chiefly for the security of rich against the depredations of the poor. But what security have the poor against the oppression and extortion of the rich? Certainly none at all. As every comfort of life is derived from land, and as the rich are the proprietors thereof, it may in some sense be said that they hold the issues of life and death; and whilst they can uninterruptedly raise their rents without limitation or restraint, they have an alarming and unbounded power over, not only the happiness, but even the lives of the great mass of the people—the poor.

“If, then, statesmen have a right to advance their lands in times of prosperity, the poor ought to have a parliament of their own choosing, invested with power to reduce them in days of adversity. This balance of power between the rich and poor would be the production of a thousand times more consolation to this nation than the chimerical nonsense of Court jugglers—‘the balance of power in Europe.’ If it would be cruel to make a statesman of £20,000 per annum live a year or two upon £10,000, how much more remorseless is it to make the Spitalfields and Norwich weavers, as well as some hundred thousands more, live upon nothing—or what is little better, upon charity.

“Hearken, O ye poor of the land! Do you fret and whine at oppression? ‘Yes.’ Then as you do, so did your fathers before you; and if you do no more, your children may whine after you. Awake! Arise! arm yourselves with truth, justice, and reason—lay siege to corruption; and your unity and invincibility shall teach your oppressors terrible things. Purge the representation of your country—claim as your inalienable right Universal

Suffrage and Annual Parliaments. And whenever you have the gratification to choose a representative, let him be from the lower order of men, and he will know how to sympathise with you and represent you in character. Then, and not till then, shall you experience universal Peace and incessant Plenty."

It is just ninety-one years since these words were spoken to the nation. Since then the fight for subsistence has grown more severe, and the struggle of the millions in all great towns harder. The rich have become richer and the poor poorer, while the gulf between the two ranks has deepened, becoming every day more impassable. All this time many acres of land in the United Kingdom have been left unreclaimed, and emigration is the great panacea put forward for increased distress. This would banish the young and strong from those villages and homes which their forefathers have inhabited since the Conquest, and thus ruthlessly break up the sweetest links which bind society together.

An extract from a letter dated 13th October, 1792, purporting to guide the society in the election of representatives, shows the opinions entertained of the farming community. "The generality of the farmers in Lancashire are as ignorant as the brutes they ride to market, and so absorbed in the sordid idea of getting, that provided they can keep up the prices of grain, cattle, etc., etc., so as to answer their landlords and pay their taxes, however enormous, they are too sluggish and indolent to think about reforms or anything of the kind; yet there is one string about their hearts which, being skilfully touched, will make them dance to any tune and move to any measure. This is the subject of tithes; and why does it touch them? Because it is within the scope of their limited capacity. Ignorant as they are in other matters, they see and pungently feel the weight of this baneful and unjust devourer of all their improvements in agriculture and husbandry. Did every tax operate in the same visible degree which this imposition does, I fear there would be an end to the idea of taxation being submitted to at all. As taxes are laid on at present, the taxation is neither more nor less than a robbery; a submission to it slavery.

"Now in the same manner that a farmer may be roused by the mention of tithes, the shoemaker may by the excessive dearth of leather, the innkeeper by the numerous and unnecessary

standing army, and all by a temperate and dispassionate relation of the immense number of sinecure places and useless offices in which the corrupt and prostitute favourites, agents, and dependants of the rich and great riot in the spoils and plunder wrested from the sweat of their brow, and continual labour of the body of the husbandman, the mechanic, the labourer, and the artificer. It is by no means a difficult matter to raise general indignation at the idea of so small a comparative number of useless, idle, and profligate drones, sucking and squandering away the honey produced by such immense numbers of hard-toiling and industrious bees. If you meet with men who have a violent prejudice in favour of any abuse or party, never attack those prejudices directly, for that will only inflame and confirm them the more ; pass them over for the present, and engage their attention towards something else, in which they will listen with less degree of apprehension of being attacked in a favourite point ; once gain their good opinion and open their eyes to one evil, they will be more ready to hear you on others, till at last the favourite object by which their eyes were jaundiced will appear in its true colours, and fall before your arguments like the rest.

“There is one thing above all others which requires to be particularly attended to, and that is, to endeavour to deceive the mass of the people with respect to those falsehoods which have been industriously propagated by the enemies of reform, in order to blind, delude, and terrify all ranks of people who are in any way independent or possessed of property. One of those falsehoods is, that the advocates of reform wish to introduce a levelling scheme or an equal partition of property. This alarms the farmers, and, indeed, all classes of men who by their industry or other adventitious circumstances are possessed of the goods of this world. So many vile ministerial prints and other tools of the government and of the privileged orders have had a very wonderful and baneful effect on the multitude, and have stamped a dread of reform on the minds of many that I know, whose situations in life would induce one reasonably to suppose it impossible so completely to impose on them ; however, it always has been the case, that falsehoods, boldly uttered, may prevail for a time, but must be overwhelmed in the end by the bright and sacred energies of truth.

“To explain this matter I have found the following method answer best. ‘Do you know such a gentleman?’ naming some one of large property and good character in the neighbourhood, who is known to be a friend to reform. ‘Yes.’ ‘Well, do you suppose that he would promote a scheme that would occasion and oblige him to part with property he possesses, in order for it to be divided amongst strangers whom he never saw or heard of?’ ‘No.’ ‘Why, then, should you suffer yourself to be imposed on by such an idle tale, fabricated and calculated for the purpose of raising a dread in you against those more enlightened of your fellow citizens who wish for a reform, as you would, did you see its necessity; a dread which may cause you to shut your eyes upon oppressive excise and game laws, exorbitant tithes, an unnecessary standing army, kept on foot at the expense of two millions and a half, for the purpose of influence and corruption; a pension list which is a disgrace to the government, and a stigma and reproach to the spirit and prudence of the nation; sinecure places, for the mere possession of which hundreds of individuals receive thousands a year each for doing nothing at all, either for the public service or their own; in short, such an enormous accumulation of taxes, and so prodigal an expenditure of their produce, as no nation on earth ever heard of or submitted to before. To make you shut your eyes and continue blind to these enormities, those idle and futile tales are villainously dispersed abroad; but believe them not, consult your own reason, and it will show you that there is a palpable lie on the face of every one of them.”

None, however, of the men from whose speeches and works these extracts have been taken, or of whose lives glimpses have been given, contributed more to advance the cause of reform than John Horne. He was a living chronicle of the great political events of his age. He hated the Whigs for having “superadded hypocrisy to a factious spirit, by constantly pledging themselves when out of office to what they never meant when in power.”

It was in the year 1782 that Horne assumed the name of Tooke. The change was made at the suggestion of William Tooke, a gentleman of fortune, who admired and respected his brilliant talents, and who strongly aided him when establishing the

Society for the Support of the Bill of Rights during the Wilkes struggle. Horne dedicated to him his "Diversions of Purley," the first important work on philology in the English language. It is now superseded by others which have the great advantage of having been written since the modern discovery of Sanscrit, and the increase of knowledge respecting the Anglo-Saxon and other Teutonic tongues; but its merit lay in its ingenuity at a time when the microscopic power of comparative grammar was unknown. Since then grammatical forms have assumed a very different and much more intelligible form. "The true nature of grammatical terminations was first pointed out by a philosopher, who, however wild some of his speculations may be, had certainly caught many a glimpse of the real life and growth of language; I mean Horne Tooke." This is the testimony of Max Müller in his *Lectures on the Science of Languages*, published in 1880.

William Tooke designated Horne his heir, and led him to incur expenses which he declared he would reimburse—promises which from avarice and vacillation he failed to perform. The nature of the service Horne rendered him, proved the existence of a claim on his gratitude, and exhibited the courage and talent of this remarkable man. William Tooke had purchased the estate of Purley, near Godstone, and here he became involved in a quarrel with his neighbour, Mr. De Grey, whose lands joined, and who claimed permanent jurisdiction over certain parts of his newly-acquired property. A contention about fish-ponds and common rights was brought into the courts of law. Mr. De Grey, who had considerable influence, contrived to get a Bill of Inclosure introduced in the House of Commons, which would have annihilated Tooke's real or presumed rights. In this difficulty Tooke consulted his friend Horne, in whose ability he had implicit confidence; nor was he mistaken in the result. Horne arrested the progress of the Bill by the novel procedure of writing a libel on the Speaker, entitled "Strike, but Hear." This letter gave the leading facts of the case, stated in the most offensive manner. The boldness of the assertion and the terseness of the remarks attracting general attention. Woodfall, the printer of the *Public Advertiser*, who published the libel, was summoned to the bar of the House. On being questioned, he gave up the name of

the author, who was present in the gallery, enjoying the scene. Horne authorized him to make this admission. On being called forth, he disavowed all disrespect to the Speaker whom he had libelled, calmly explained the motives of the proceeding, and wound up with so luminous a statement of the case, that the schemers and advocates of the injustice were baffled, the obnoxious parts of the Bill thrown out, and several resolutions were moved and carried to prevent all such hasty proceedings in the future. After a slight formality of detention in custody, and with the assistance of his friends Dunning and Burke, he was set at liberty on some pretended inconclusiveness of proof against him.

Horne Tooke published many pamphlets. The "Two Pairs of Portraits" perhaps had most weight. This was published in 1788, and contained a pointed contrast between the two Pitts and the two Foxes, greatly to the disadvantage and depreciation of the latter, who were never forgiven by Horne for the decided hostility to popular interests with which the younger Fox began his political career, and his subsequent coalition with Lord North. Horne Tooke did not believe that the public cause could be materially aided by rakes and gamblers, and this was the burden of the pamphlet. His sketch of the characters of the Pitts and Foxes was given in parallel columns, and concluded with these two questions:—

First.—"Which two of them will you choose to hang up in your cabinets, the Pitts or the Foxes?"

Second.—"Where, on your conscience, should the other two be hanged?"

He had also quarrelled with Sheridan and Fox on the same ground which led him to break with Wilkes—their licentiousness and extravagance. Horne Tooke made three attempts to enter Parliament. On the last occasion only was he successful. In 1790 he stood for Westminster, opposed to Fox and Lord Wood; he polled 1,700 votes, and improved the opportunity of his failure by presenting a petition to the House of Commons, in which he boldly censured its corrupt practices. In 1796 he again stood, but was unsuccessful. In 1801 he, however, entered the House as member for Old Sarum, on the nomination of the eccentric Lord Camelford, who, for crossing from Dover to Calais while

we were at war with France, was arrested by the police. Mr. Pitt, his kinsman, procured his release after a delay which exasperated the nobleman. "How can I avenge myself?" asked the enraged Camelford, speaking to Tooke, with whom he was on intimate terms. "Easy enough," was the reply, "by putting your black servant, Mungo, into the borough of Old Sarum." Camelford agreed, but next day thought better of it, and told Tooke so. "Well, the next best thing you can do is to put me in." In justice to Tooke it must be said that he spoke only in jest, but Camelford thought highly of his abilities, and argued with him for three days and no small part of three nights before Tooke would give his assent. When returned, he sat only to the end of that Parliament. During the short period of his privilege, he conducted himself with great moderation and good sense. On taking his seat, Earl Temple, son of the Marquis of Buckingham, gave notice that he should, if no petition against the return was presented within a fortnight, inquire into the question of his eligibility. The mover chose to style him the reverend gentleman, which Tooke indignantly denounced as ungenerous, and an untrue prejudgment of the question before the House. "I intended no offence," replied the mover. "I used the term as a matter of course without any particular meaning." "I accept the explanation," rejoined Tooke. "You called me the reverend without any meaning to be attached to the epithet, precisely as I call you the honourable gentleman." As to the question of his clericality being an objection, Tooke expressed some surprise, and asked with withering scorn what kind of contagious malady was likely to affect the House by his presence; and argued that a guarantee of thirty years' emancipation from his clerical office must be sufficient to guard against the infection of his original character. He had formally quitted his clerical profession in the year 1772, when such was the estimation in which he was held by his friends, that four out of them came forward and urged him to study law, offering him their joint bond for £400 a year till such time as he was called. Tooke accepted the offer, but never drew a penny from them. The following year he resigned his living, believing that this act, and the avowal that he forthwith intended to live as a layman, would sever him from his connection with the

profession. Temple, however, had good foundation for his dislike of Tooke. The mysterious note of Jeremiah Joyce, read at the trial, had reference to the prodigal grants which had been heaped on the Temples and Granvilles, and Tooke's determination to oppose them. When Lord Temple explained his motive for prosecuting the inquiry, he assumed a virtuous and lofty air, saying that he did so as one who had a stake in the country, intimating that Tooke was only an adventurer. In reply, Tooke hoped that the House would pay little attention to this boasted "stake." "I, too, have a stake in the country, and a deep stake; it is not stolen, to be sure, from the public hedge; for I have planted it myself. This stake, sir, I would not exchange for all the notes of the noble lord, together with the notes of all his connections. In this, too, I think mine is different from his, and far to be preferred to it. His cannot be increased without detracting from the public stock; mine is my character, and I cannot add to it without having added to the comfort and happiness of the people." This was a severe but well-merited rebuke, when it is remembered that Temple's family, as well as many others of the nobility, had grown rich upon the public money.

Tooke combated the notion that he could not lay down his functions as a priest; which doctrine he thought must appear futile, as many of the canons of the church dwelt on depositions of priests. "One of these states," added he, "that if any clergyman attempted to cast out devils unlawfully, such a person should be deposed. Now, for example, Mr. Speaker, if I had attempted to cast out the devil out of this House, I must have been deposed, and of course been deemed ineligible. But in this case my only crime is my innocence—my only guilt that of not having scandalized my order. I feel myself, sir, exactly in the same situation of the girl who applied to be received into the Magdalen. On being asked the particulars of her misfortune, she answered she was as innocent as the child unborn. The reply was, 'This is a place only for creatures of prostitution; you must go and qualify before you can be admitted.'"

The subject of contention was finally settled by Addington, the meanest of ministers, whose best actions never rose beyond the level of mediocrity, bringing in a Bill which excluded persons in

holy orders from taking a seat in the House of Commons. This Act, and the disreputable manner in which it was hurried through, showed that the Ministry were affected by personal antipathies, and legislated against an individual.

The eighteenth century can present no brighter example of political morality than that of Tooke. His action on most of the great public questions of his day was, for the most part, just and high-minded. In his youth he wrote and said many things which were foolish ; but from manhood till death he was a firm, consistent, and able supporter of the rights of the people, without a taint of republicanism. All his life long he fought with venality and corruption, and with those who profited by it. It is much to his honour that this quarrel terminated only with his life, and that for thirty years of that stormy span of existence, he led the van in exposing and denouncing the wholesale robbery of the people, and in denouncing political dishonesty wherever he found it.

The progress of Radical Reform had been arrested long before its first advocates passed away from their labours ; and, although their earnestness had by no means diminished, they were compelled to spend their last years in a state of inactivity. Such men as Cartwright, Horne, and their fellows were never unfaithful to the principles for which they had laboured and suffered. But the circumstances of the period prevented the realization of their objects. Chief among these were the extravagances and excesses of the revolution in France. In that country the revolution had begun with fairly moderate and practical proposals, such as would meet the sympathy of English reformers. But the originators of the movement, from chivalrous motives gave way too soon to men who aimed, not so much at the reformation as the destruction of society. Government in France passed into the hands of successive bodies of men, each more violent than its predecessor, until at last the brave and magnanimous were either exterminated or exiled, and the country became a scene of terror and bloodshed, from which it was rescued only by the grape-shot and military despotism of the First Napoleon.

The English Radicals were in sympathy with the earlier stages of the French Revolution, and in consequence suffered from Government prosecution and the obloquy of the mob. That

sympathy never went the length of sanctioning the sanguinary and destructive course which the French Revolution subsequently took.

But, nevertheless, the countenance given by the Radical Pioneers to each reasonable stage of the Revolution, was laid to their charge as a crime, and they were suspected of sympathizing with all its subsequent horrors. The educated supporters of absolutism at home would not, and the uneducated people could not, discriminate. Besides this, many of the aristocratic supporters of the Radicals, through interest or fear of popular odium, deserted the cause. Pitt, the "heaven-born minister," yielding to the unreasoning prejudices of the people, declared war against the French Republic. The reformers of the last century were opposed to wars with France, and to the heavy expenditure of human life and wealth which they involved. Nothing was left for them but silence and retirement. The results, however, which they had achieved remained. Under the assertion of parliamentary privileges, the right of the electors to an unfettered choice of representation had been established. A fair interpretation of the law of libel and the liberty of the press, against the influence of one of the most eminent judges, had been obtained. The rights of public meeting and free discussion of public affairs were asserted; while the first blow to bribery and corruption in public affairs was given. The King, ministers, judges, and Parliament were all taught that government must be carried on, not according to their own personal views and interests, but according to the wishes and welfare of the people. Much of this lesson has been forgotten, and much yet remains to be done. The early Radicals never failed to recognize that Liberty was a plant of slow growth, and contented themselves by rooting out only the weeds which checked its development. They saw clearly that further reforms must be left to a succeeding generation. But in the earnestness with which they contended for the principles they held, the constancy with which they suffered, and the resolute manner in which they enforced their views, they have left examples worthy of imitation, and achieved successes which have a claim on our enduring gratitude.

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DALY, Dawn of radicalism.



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